

LOUIS DE BONCŒUR.

A

DOMESTICK TALE.

BY

CATHERINE LARA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Misfortune does not always wait on vice :
Nor is success the constant guest of virtue.
Perhaps the Gods more amiably design
To shew the hero, struggling in the toils
Of unforeseen—unmerited distress.
The great example beams instruction forth,
And better serves the purposes of Heaven.

HAVARD.

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1796.

DOMESTIC LINE

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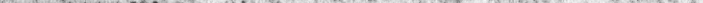
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This is a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some faint smudges and discoloration, characteristic of old paper. There is no text or other markings on the page.

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P R E F A C E.

THE general taste manifested for Novels has rendered this species of literary composition absolutely necessary, and authors are not only obliged to amuse the publick with such productions, but to renew them frequently. The fantastick tales of castles, skeletons, and ghosts, with which the press has lately teemed, are not, however, meant, their want of consistency and probability must exclude them from permanent esteem, notwithstanding they may be written with all the fascinating elegance of cultivated genius.

We love to be interested by what we read, and fictions to please should wear the face of truth. It must, however, be allowed there are some works, in which, though common sense and

reason are set at defiance by the introduction of supernatural agency, which contain excellent moral deductions, and from which some advantage may be derived. But who would read a Novel solely for its morality? It will serve to beguile an idle hour, but is then thrown aside without further thought.

So widely is philosophy diffused in the present age, that it has even glided into Novels. There is scarcely an author but fancies he has written a philosophick work when he presents the publick with three, four, or more volumes, under the title of *Memoirs*, *Adventures*, or a *Novel*. There is no writer, however weak or trivial, who, if he has, or thinks he possesses some singular ideas, but imagines he is instantly a philosopher. Not to think like the generality of men, to vaunt of having shaken off all prejudices, and being a general sceptick, is to be a philosopher. They who are so unfortunate as to make

two or three superficial reflections, imagine themselves to be suddenly illuminated with the spirit of Plato or Aristotle. Add to this a trifling faculty for invention, a circumscribed reading, and a facility of writing, a work is 'produced without fear of criticism, without the toil of study, without knowledge of nature, or acquaintance with life,' and to the honour of the public discrimination soon dies away.

Many parents have prohibited their daughters from Novel reading. But should this be general? Novels that delineate the manners, display virtue in a lovely form and vice in disgusting array, form the taste, improve the judgment, and inculcate rational principles. They who suffer themselves to be seduced by a tender tale, will be equally susceptible of a similar effect by a tender declaration from a lover. It is the natural disposition which produces the effect—art is not contributory.

The present volumes, as likewise *Durval and Adelaide*, are translated from the French, with some alterations and additions. The characters they exhibit are constantly to be met with in society, influenced by those passions, and possessing those qualities that characterize human nature. The events are natural, and it is hoped they will excite and sustain an interest throughout the perusal.

Such is the character of these Novels, now submitted to the publick, on whose impartiality their fate depends.

CATHERINE LARA.

LONDON,

1796.

LOUIS



LOUIS DE BONCŒUR.

LETTER I.

LOUIS *de* BONCŒUR *to the Marquis*
*de L*****.*

I READ your letter, my much respected friend, with that sincere satisfaction, which an account of the happiness and welfare of those to whom we are attached invariably affords.

Contrary to your opinion, the tranquil pleasures of retired life have greatly contributed to restore my mind to a degree of serenity it has long been a stranger to, and a perseverance in my present plan promises to crown my endeavours in the attainment of permanent felicity. Here, in domestick privacy, I enjoy pleasures in which there are no deceit—pleasures which leave neither

disquietude or dissatisfaction behind them. Undisturbed by treacherous fondness or groundless hate, my life glides easily along like the shadow of a passing cloud.

“The world excluded, ev’ry passion hush’d,
 Here the soul sits in council; ponders past;
 “Predestines future action. Sees nor feels
 “Tumultuous life———.”

Though I have not so many vacant hours as you imagine, I can find sufficient time to gratify your wish, for a full and connected detail of the events in my life: and to convince you of my readiness to grant your request, I shall proceed without any further preface.

In an engagement in which the Prince de Condé gained some trifling advantage over General Montecuculi, my grandfather, the Chevalier de Boncœur, and four of his sons, lost their lives. My father, who escaped a similar fate merely from his youth, was the only remaining weak branch of a noble family, more known by its military distinctions than the favours of fortune.

The profession of arms, to which it seems to have been consecrated for many
 ages,



ages, had obtained it more glory than riches. Some sterile honours were the sole recompense of my ancestors exertions, who were far better warriors than courtiers; and the rank of Lieutenant-colonel, of which my grandfather could not be deprived, was the only reward of forty years toil.

It is true, the natural austerity of his manners, and the great superiority of his abilities, had often led him to censure without reserve, the ignorance, and oftener the hypocrisy, of those in power whom he had frequently observed to sacrifice the good of the state to their interest or private vengeance: yet neither self-love or envy could ever induce him to disclose the misconduct of an officer; he always suffered their faults to sink into oblivion when he could not repair them; often has he rescued his regiment from dangers, into which the imprudence or obstinacy of his General had plunged it, and frequently obtained advantages, for which his superiors received the praise, and the more solid remuneration.

These services, instead of obtaining him favour, served but to excite the envy of

those whom he had benefited by his exertions ; yet, less sensible to the injustice of government, than attached to the duties of his situation, the zeal with which he was actuated for the good of his country was never lessened, and his conduct was as irreproachable as his virtue.

From this statement of my grandfather's qualifications, some idea may be formed of what my father's situation was likely to be. Without relations, without protectors, without hopes for the future, and almost without resources for the present, he, at twelve years of age, felt all the horrors of his condition without the power of relieving them. Left to the care of an honest, though indigent and ignorant curate, it did not seem possible he should ever rise above the confined station, to which his evil fortune had apparently destined him. This curate, who had the care of his education during his father's absence, resolved to continue his care after his death, to share with him his frugal means, and teach him what he knew, which was little more than writing and reading, and to support poverty patiently.

The

The expenses of this worthy ecclesiastick, already necessarily very limited from the smallness of his revenue, were obliged to be now more restrained, as he wished to lay aside some money, in order to enable his adopted child, when at a proper age, to enter into the army, and endeavour to obtain those advantages which his birth, and his father's long and great services entitled him to. Although these generous projects were never executed, my father did not think the curate less the cause of what followed, and his gratitude was equally sincere.

A favourable transition now took place in my father's situation; his benefactor was changed for one more rich and equally generous. The President de Bonnelles, lord of the village in which my father was brought up, had heard of the death of the Chevalier de Boncœur and his four sons with extreme sorrow; and the miserable situation of the remaining one, deeply interested him. He had often endeavoured to render my grandfather's situation more comfortable, by offering him his purse, but which was invariably and steadily refused by the Chevalier. The only offer

he ever accepted was the permission of hunting on the President's grounds, when circumstances would permit him to visit a small fief, which had for many years served as an asylum to his ancestors, but was seized by his creditors the moment his death was known. The President ever delicately desirous of being useful to him, once proposed an exchange of the estate on which he lived for that my grandfather possessed, which would have been extremely advantageous, but this was refused from the same motive with which it was offered. He was not insensible, however, of his friend's generosity, his refusal did not lessen his gratitude, but his delicacy and high spirit taught him to think that a gentleman should not receive any benefactions but from his country, when he had merited them by his services.

In proportion as the Chevalier de Boncœur was austere and haughty, my father was frank and complaisant. Mildness was delineated in every trait, and the mere motion of his lips in speaking expressed the sensibility of his soul; his heart seemed to attract all that ap-

approached it. So amiable and so unfortunate a child could not fail of exciting great interest, and the tender gratitude which his every action denoted, served to increase that affection which he had naturally inspired; his least movement was endearing, and the warmth of his temper which sometimes ruffled the customary mildness of his character, tended but to heighten his sensibility.

The progress my father made in his benefactor's affection, could only be equalled by that he made in the sciences, and those studies which the President thought necessary to his education. A few years application made up for the many he had lost, and at the age of sixteen there were but few situations in which he could not acquit himself with propriety.

From the melancholy fate of the Chevalier de Boncœur and his four sons, the President was fearful of my father's wishing to pursue so dangerous a career; he therefore took an opportunity of representing the profession of arms more as the horrid employ of leading our fellow-citizens to death, frequently for trivial causes, and oftener for criminal

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purposes,

purposes, than as offering the glorious advantage of defending our country ; thus condemning the profession upon the principles of humanity and philosophy, he persuaded my father to relinquish the perilous pursuit, and adopt one more consonant to the natural mildness of his inclinations.

At an immense expense, which my father's premature merit only could justify, Mr. Bonnelles obtained for him the office of Counsellor to the Parliament of ——— ; in which situation he soon acquired great respect, as much for his integrity, as his assiduous attention, and the superiority of his intelligence, by which he was enabled at the first view to distinguish the claims of innocence from the chicanery of guilt, and thereby distribute justice agreeable to the intention of the laws.

Born with that eloquence which native sensibility inspires, persuasion was attached to his words, and the will of others invariably yielded to his. Some celebrated causes in which he had been engaged, and some publick discourses which he was obliged to deliver on certain days, extended his reputation to the

the King's ears, by whom he was appointed Attorney General; then vacant by the death of Mr. de —.

Thus, at an age when few quit the school, my father found himself at the head of an august senate. I think it must have appeared strange to see so young a man directing those who had grown grey in the service. But what was more a subject of astonishment, and completes my father's praise, was, that no one regarded his rapid elevation with jealousy; the old men considered him as their son, and if any were really envious, it was of the *Président de Bonnelles*, whom they incessantly congratulated on the honour of having such a ward as my father.

While his generous patron was enjoying the sweet fruit of his munificent care, his eyes were often filled with tears when he looked at his dear pupil; at these times would my father fling himself into his arms, and declare his gratitude in the most affectionate and interesting terms. That modesty, so inseparable from superior talents, rendered the praises which he constantly received more fatiguing than agreeable.

They were not necessary to excite his emulation, as he was naturally inclined to be zealous in his duty.

The beautiful serenity of the evening invites me to walk, I shall therefore lay aside my pen till to-morrow, when I will resume my narrative.

Farewell.

LETTER II.

The same to the same.

THE President de Bonnelles had no children, and this was the only drawback on the continued and unvaried happiness he had enjoyed with his wife for fifteen years. My father now supplied this deficiency. He had for some time adopted him as his son, and resolved to treat him as such; but had he only been attentive to his fortune, it is doubtful whether it would have contributed to his happiness; the President therefore resolved to establish my father solidly, by leaving him all his fortune and marrying him to a most lovely niece, who was lately arrived from America with immense property.

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This alliance offered every thing ambition or love could wish, and the President fondly looked forward to the completion of my father's happiness; but at the moment these flattering projects were to be realized, they were destroyed by the sudden death of Mr. de Bonnelles.

This alarming and unexpected loss acutely affected my father; in his deep sorrow he neglected, or rather avoided every thing that might destroy or weaken his affliction. In this situation his destined wife was borne from his arms by one who had taken advantage of his inattention to her, to win her affections. Her riches and even her beauty had never excited much desire in my father's bosom; his regret, therefore, at her inconstancy was but weak; he only felt her loss, as she was the choice of his benefactor.

My father was almost equally beloved by all who knew him, but Mrs. de Bonnelles considered him as the object in which all her tenderness should be centered. Their grief for the loss of the President was alike profound and sincere, and if any difference could be

perceived, it was from that excess of sensibility ever more prevalent in the softer sex. She considered him as supplying the place of a son which nature had refused her, and as a consolation for the loss of a husband, of which Providence had deprived her. My father, on his part readily shared his sorrows with his amiable friend; their loss, regret, and consolation was mutual, and the union of their sorrows was as indispensable as that of their reciprocal affection.

Thus circumstanced, they were imperceptibly led into a situation they neither of them foresaw. Mrs. de Bonnelles was much younger than the President, and but few years older than him she called her son, but the grave countenance and steady conduct of my father, made him appear about the same age as the widow.

This amiable woman possessed more charms than were requisite to impress a heart much less susceptible than my father's. Gratitude had disposed him to receive the impressions of love. He soon yielded to the impulse that led him towards the dear and sole object of

his

his tenderness. Mrs. de Bonnelles' inclinations anticipated my father's sentiments; but the gravity of her age, and the delicacy of her sex, had compelled her more than once to conceal, under the mask of friendship, what long habit would not admit of being repelled.

So tenderly disposed, it was impossible to restrain their affection within the narrow limits of friendship. Their constraint was equally painful. They each panted for an opportunity to express their sentiments, and at length they burst from their hearts at the same instant; on the first communication, they, without the smallest reserve, yielded to the inebriating delight of their happy situation; but these transports gave way to reflection; my father's delicacy was alarmed by a passion, which seemed an insult to the memory of his revered benefactor. He knew the sentiments of the amiable and interesting Mrs. de Bonnelles too well to hesitate communicating his ideas to her.

She told him similar scruples had arisen in her mind, but her affection for him had overcome them. She had, however, minutely and severely considered

dered what was due to her late husband. She could not think of the obligations she owed him during his life, without recollecting those he had mutually bestowed on her and my father at his death. She added, “ if he committed the care of your fortune to me, his charge to you, to contribute to my happiness, and for us never to separate, was not less sacred ; indeed he seems to have enjoined our union. But allowing this construction not to be just, he did not forbid us from ensuring our felicity by such procedure. If departed spirits can take cognizance of what passes on earth, I am sure he will be happy to see the two persons who were most dear to him in his life-time, united for ever. Some such idea certainly softened the agonies of his dissolution, and easy at our fate he submitted to his with less regret.”

Less solid or less interesting reasons would have been sufficient to determine my father to follow those inclinations which he could not have suppressed but with great pain ; and yielding to their influence with the most pure and lively satis-

satisfaction, he was at length united for ever in the bonds of love and hymen with her, to whom esteem and gratitude had long attached him.

If their exterior marks of fondness were not always equal, it arose from a sentiment of veneration (of which my father could not divest himself) for a woman whom he had been accustomed to consider as his mother and benefactress; his tenderness and affection, however, was not the less, because it was more respectful than is general in the marriage state.

To the union of such love and virtue am I indebted for life, and though it has been marked with the most severe afflictions, I thank heaven for having experienced them.—

————— “ Adversity,

Tho’ like a Toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head.”

As my mother never gave the President de Bonnelles a pledge of their union, my father was fearful he should not perpetuate his name; he never indulged the least hope to the contrary; “What generation,” he would say,

“ can Providence have more interest in
“ producing, than that of a virtuous
“ man, and who more adequate to the
“ diffusion of the social virtues among
“ a family than my late benefactor? ”

It appeared to him that the all-wise Creator was interested in preserving to the human race, such characters as would incessantly remind them of divine perfection.

If such reflections destroyed every hope in my father's bosom of being more fortunate than his predecessor, how shall I describe his joy, or rather excessive transport, when he found the secret wishes of his heart, (for he never mentioned them to my mother) so fully granted. He always hoped that if his union was blessed with fruition, it might be a son, whose mind he might cultivate, and make him his friend; for the extreme sensibility of his heart, seemed contracted, since he lost one of the cherished objects of his most sincere affection.

As to my mother, whose fondness for her first husband was unlimited, but ashamed, (if I may use the expression) of not having given him any proof, was
yet

yet more hopeless of any offspring from her present alliance; and should such a happy and unexpected event occur, she was careless of what sex it might be: but Providence, as if desirous of gratifying the hopes of their virtuous love, blessed them two-fold; my birth was followed by that of a sister a few hours afterwards. Their transports of love and joy were unbounded. My pen is inadequate to the description, neither is it necessary to the heart of sensibility or indifference.

To see two persons so inebriated with reciprocal love, it is rather astonishing they delayed enjoying their mutual fondness until their intercourse was duly authorized. Such was the first reflection that occurred to those who saw them for six years, so intimately attached, always with each other, and indulging themselves without mystery or scruple in the endearing caresses of gratitude and friendship.

But those who lived on the most intimate footing with them, and were acquainted with their principles, knew it was as impossible for them to admit of a guilty idea, as to restrain their native sensi-

sensibility from enjoying the legitimate sentiments of virtue.

Persons truly virtuous attach but little faith to *invincible sympathies*, which in other words, is nothing more than a seduction of the senses, that derives power from the weakness with which it is repelled, and only involves the coward who has not the power of defence. Criminality will never find place in a heart engaged in virtue; a base thought never intrudes on the well-formed mind.

We never suggest a project without a secret hope of seeing it succeed; we often perceive its attendant difficulties, but difficulties are more or less attached to every species of enterprize, and the mind led astray by its own desires, has always in reserve some indistinct resources, on which it founds its hopes: the moment of seduction ensures the defeat; the heart that receives the seeds of vice, has been long corrupt; poisonous and infectious plants only flourish in mud and mire. —

Left I should tire you with moralizing, I shall for the present conclude.

Farewell.

LET-

LETTER III.

The same to the same.

RESERVE your animadversions, my dear friend, until the conclusion of my eventful story. Do not, however, imagine I wish to deter you from writing; an epistolary communication with you, constitutes one of the chief pleasures of my seclusion. If your letters contain an account of your and your dear family's felicity, I am content; recollect, however, I am not averse to *bearing* of the occurrences in the gay and busy world. Thus much in reply to your last. I shall now proceed with my narrative.—

The connubial happiness my father enjoyed, was not of long duration; the delicacy of my mother's constitution was inadequate to the delightful task of nurturing her infant at her bosom; her exertions to acquit herself of this great maternal duty, evidently injured her health; nor was it until she was almost exhausted, that she yielded to the entreaties of her friends, and relinquished the sacred charge into other hands, in
condi-

condition that the nurse should never be out of her presence. For some days after this, she seemed to recover strength; but the evil she endeavoured to avoid, was much less than that she now experienced; the milk not finding its accustomed outlet, occasioned a fever and convulsions, which in a few days laid her in the tomb.

If I have given any idea of my father's sensibility, it will be useless to describe his grief for this melancholy loss; and I readily omit attempting to excite that regret, which the bounty of heaven spared me, by letting me know the cause before I was capable of feeling the effect; there remained, however, many causes of sorrow to me; and which I have severely experienced in the course of a long and painful life, commenced under the lowering presages of every evil, by which heaven might wish to prove my submission to its will, and receive me to its bosom hereafter: my hopes in which, have supported me in many agonizing trials.

The important occupations in which my father was engaged, and the unremitting attention he bestowed on the

first years of my infancy, insensibly dispelled that profound melancholy which my mother's death had occasioned. Concentrating for a beloved son, all those tender sentiments, which the lovely object the grave now contained had engaged, he occupied himself solely in those cares, which paternal love, and such interesting circumstances, could not fail to excite in a heart so susceptible as his. The soft melancholy with which his mind was imbued, disposed mine for the reception of the most tender affections, and this formed the basis of my character. Accustomed from the most early period of my life to think and feel, I quitted infantine amusements almost with my cradle, and the continual caresses of a fond father infused the most exquisite tenderness into my heart, before my organs had the power of expressing it. A father's heart is certainly the chief work of nature; and I can venture to say, with a sensation of pleasure (which recalls many an adored father excited) that no son ever felt more strongly, or extended the sentiments of love, respect, and filial piety further than I did. Oh! Heaven!

Heaven! scarcely can I at this moment restrain the sighs that burst from my heart, and I am obliged to lay aside my pen, that the tears which obstruct my sight may flow, and not obliterate what I have written. * * * * *

* * * * *

My agitation is somewhat subsided, my blood flows towards my heart with less precipitation, its action is less frequent, my ideas are more arranged, and my thoughts are less confused.

The first principles my father endeavoured to impress most strongly on my mind were those of religion, as a solid basis on which all others should be supported; solicitously careful of separating its contemptible prejudices from its holy precepts, he discarded all vain and ridiculous customs from its respectable institutes. "Worship," he would say, "should be as pure as the Divinity who receives it; the homage that should be offered to him consists less in indiscreet prayers for the completion of desires often unjust, and too frequently immoderate, than in actions of grace for the abundant favours we receive. What can you ask

“ ask of celestial Providence, which
“ you do not already possess? Would
“ you wish it should dispossess others
“ of their riches to bestow them upon
“ you? How great would be your
“ pride to suppose you could make bet-
“ ter use of them! Would you wish
“ the Almighty to interrupt the order
“ of time to prolong your life, or in-
“ crease the faculties of your organs and
“ your health; that you might indulge
“ more easily in the excess of your pas-
“ sions? Would you wish him to bestow
“ on you a superior wisdom, which by
“ flattering your vanity would elevate
“ you above your equals; or that he
“ should give you a power over the
“ destinies of your fellow creatures,
“ and charge you with diffusing his
“ favours? Be content to merit by a
“ wise resignation, the situation which
“ he has been pleased you should fill.”

By these wise and holy lessons, my father taught me to moderate the ardour of my desires, and possessed me of the means of acquiring that patience, which I have since found so useful and necessary to my support. When my weak powers were embarrassed by doubts, he diffi-

dissipated them by such solid reasoning and victorious proofs, that my submission to faith was by no means painful to the exercise of reason; my mind, therefore, satisfied and freed from those shackles which disturbed it, was better prepared for the reception of the sound truths of morality: truths equally interesting and luminous, by which my heart was inspired with the most pure and delicious sentiments; my soul thus warmed with a love for the beautiful, experienced at those moments, if I may use the expression, the delirium of heroism, and the fever of virtue. I panted for an opportunity to perform some good action, and with pleasure would I have shed my blood for the good of humanity; I threw myself into my father's arms, and embracing him with the greatest ardour, only asked of heaven to give me opportunities of shewing myself worthy of such a respectable and cherished parent.

"Happy young man," he exclaimed, fixing his eyes on me full of tears—silence succeeded these few words, then respiring with a deep sigh, he added—
"Happier father!" Seized with a pleasing

pleasing confusion, I hid my face in his bosom, his head rested on mine, and his tears fell on my cheeks already bedewed by my own.

Nevertheless this ardent zeal, this burning flame, required restraint; my immoderate love of virtue inspired me with the most implacable hatred for vice.

“To virtue only and her friends, a friend.”

The wicked found in me, a most irreconcilable enemy, and the purity of my intentions often led me wrong in the severity of my animadversions. I did not fear, pointing out corruption and cowardice wherever I found them. The idea that they were amiable indulgences, which the weakness of human nature required, never entered my mind.

My father, whose excessive fondness did not prevent him from seeing my faults, and whose interest in my education kept him watchful of my conduct, was alarmed at the asperity of my manner, which he considered as an evil equally dangerous with those I condemned. He, therefore, took the first opportunity of shewing to me the impropriety of such excessive intolerance.

Once I declaimed with great warmth against a lady, who after having universally maintained the most irréproachable conduct, admitted a strange young man into her house, with whom she appeared in publick, and never attempted to conceal from her domesticks that she admitted him into her chamber every night for two or three hours: what irritated me most was the hypocrisy of which I supposed this woman guilty, and the address with which she conciliated the esteem of all who knew her. Think, my friend, how contemptible I appeared, and her character exalted, when this young man, who had been the object of scandal and calumny, was her son, whose birth she had been obliged to conceal for very important reasons.

After suffering my acrimony to vent itself freely, my father, with a mildness which he wished to inspire me with, as much by example as by lessons, asked which of the virtues I preferred; I replied, not without a tincture of warmth, "Humanity, Sir, without doubt."—"Then," said he, "if any one was to inform you that a decrepid and debilitated

“ litated man, walking in a rugged
“ path, surrounded with precipices,
“ had slipped, and that his fellow-trav-
“ veller, who was strong and healthy,
“ instead of offering him assistance,
“ threw him over one of the precipices,
“ how would you receive this man, if
“ he was to present himself before you
“ with an air of triumph, boasting of
“ that vigour which had empowered
“ him to acquire such a victory over
“ his unfortunate companion? ”

“ O God! ” I exclaimed, trembling
with indignation, “ I know of no pu-
“ nishment sufficiently cruel for such an
“ atrocious crime.”

“ If so,” said my father, affecting
an air of severity, “ invent some new
“ one for those who, like you, insult
“ those unfortunate persons, who may
“ have fallen from virtue in the career
“ of life.”

No reflection or reprimand was added
to this terrible sentence; to me it was
like a flash of lightning, that illumines
him it annihilates; I remained motion-
less: had the ground on which I stood
opened under my feet, I should have
felt less terror; it was the first reproach

from a father, from whom I had never received but caresses and praise, which I thought I merited from the same motives that he now imprecated; I could not look at him. I threw myself at his feet with such humiliation as left him no doubt of the effect of his lesson; my heart was torn with grief, and all my faculties were oppressed by a deep sense of shame. Affected by my situation, my father attempted to raise me, but his touch occasioned such a trembling, that I sunk senseless to the ground.

On my recovery, I found my father nearly in the same state I had been, from the alarm I had occasioned him, and reproaching himself for having reprimanded me so severely. He felt acutely for what he called his harshness.

No one could form a just idea of my character, or attachment to my adored father, it was composed of the warmth of love, the tenderness of friendship, and the respect which veneration inspires; the fear of committing an action, or uttering a word that might displease him, would make me tremble as much as one, who was about committing the most heinous crime.

In the present age, when filial affection is absorbed by more trifling considerations, mine may appear excessive, but I premise that to this alone, all the events of my life are owing. If you think that from such a basis nothing interesting or worthy your attention can have resulted, I would not willingly proceed further in my history. Tell me your sentiments with the candour our long friendship authorises.

Adieu.

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LETTER IV.

*The same to the same.*

WHERE such a fond union of paternal and filial love existed, it may be easily supposed that a determination to celibacy was a principal point in our plan of living. How could we think of depriving each other of the smallest portion of that reciprocal tenderness which constituted our happiness? Or how separate two hearts united by every point of our existence? It would not have been probable even in a less

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stronger

stronger union, to think of depriving those we love of a part of their affection, to fix it on an unknown object of which we have no idea. Should we willingly participate with a stranger what constitutes the happiness of our lives?

Neither was my father desirous of seeing the first place in his son's heart disputed; it was, however, with much regret that he saw me inclined to renounce the happiness of a situation in which he had experienced so much delight; and without attempting to wound my affection by propositions of an alliance, on which he had not fully thought, he hoped the sight of some amiable woman would be more eloquent than all the reasons he could suggest in favour of marriage. He was not less delicate than me in the extreme tenderness which united us to each other; but he was more jealous of my happiness than his own immediate satisfaction. In the wife that might be the object of my choice, and the offspring that might be expected from a happy alliance, he only saw more means of giving me daily proofs of his paternal affection.

What

What further influenced him wishing me to renounce celibacy, was, that my sister seemed irrevocably decided in favour of living at the convent in which she had been some time.

With this design he took me oftener than I wished into company, where my serious character and reserved manner prevented me from receiving or diffusing amusement: I knew not how to affect that cold and sterile eagerness, which politeness has made a duty. I never thought of darting across a room to pick up a fan which a lady may have let fall. I considered such an act, a species of folly, the only consequence of which could be, that I must return quietly to my seat again. I was still farther from being profuse in my adulatory compliments to the ladies, as it only served to excite their pride, which, by enervating their natural modesty, often suffuses those charms with a blush, which excited the praise. I had too good an opinion of women to think they listened with pleasure to those studied phrases, ycleped compliments. Not supposing them to possess less abilities, or less virtuous affections than men, I treated them with the same freedom,



dom, though with rather more respect, considering them as beings nearer perfection.

This conduct, divested of what is called agreeable attentions, but which I think trivial and contemptible, could not fail of alienating the friendship of those, who were content to receive from flattery what was refused them from esteem; neither was I more esteemed among the men whose first duties are equivocal civilities, and their highest homage base servility; but I regarded not this vile portion of society, who were corrupted by each other, and only worthy of associating, after having been separated from the rest.

It is less for the gratification of self-love, than to offer that justice to the fair sex which they merit, that I here develope the motives of the gratitude I owe them, and the wrongs which I have been guilty of towards them, notwithstanding my sincere desire of respecting, loving, and assisting them without the least hope of the smallest attention on their part.

At an age when serious reflection, engendered by a long train of misfortunes, has taught me to esteem virtue only.

only, I am far from attaching any importance to those advantages, which I have for a long time discontinued to think such, and to which I cannot have the least pretensions, as it is impossible to conceal that nature has not endowed me, with the necessary requisites for gallant achievements.

Independent of the natural austerity of my character, which always induced me to neglect those means which prejudice the ladies in our favour, my physiognomy presented, at first view, something dull and disgusting to those who were fond of that vociferous gaiety which is often the soul of society, in which those who compose it do not meet, but to dispel the uneasiness, being alone, occasions.

With remarkable strong features, thick black eye-brows, a dark brown complexion, a deep and sonorous voice, a bold step, and an uncommon appearance of vigour in the form of my body, I was rather calculated to frighten away love, than to attract the fair and beautiful; and it arose only from those essential qualities with which heaven was pleased to endow me, that I am

debted to the tender sentiments of her who was destined to be my wife.

The President de Bonnelles having left my father great part of his immense property, and his amiable widow uniting herself to his pupil, did not fail to irritate his relations against us, as they had formed great hopes of being his fortunate successors; but my father's generous conduct soon obtained their friendship.

Among the many friends my father's uncommon and noble conduct obtained him, was Mrs. de Rozières, who seemed particularly sensible of his generous behaviour. Left a widow, and mother of a son and two daughters, she had for some years lived retired at a small estate, where her economy gave her the means of establishing her children advantageously. Few women enjoyed more natural advantages; she had cultivated them with great attention, and her care and abilities were fully adequate to the education of her children. She had now for some time lived in the metropolis, with a view of marrying her daughters splendidly; for her son she obtained a situation in the marine



rine service, where his father had often distinguished himself.

This amiable family was as tenderly attached to each other as my father and myself; from praising the estimable qualities which I admired in them, my father proposed our cultivating a more intimate acquaintance, assuring me I should find more real pleasures in their society, than in any I had yet formed. I had already frequently visited, with the hope that the similitude of our tastes might procure us reciprocal satisfaction. I offered no objections to my father's wishes, and in their prosecution I found every reason to approve of his design.

On a first view of Mrs. de Rozieres, every idea that you can form of a tender and respectable parent occurred to the mind; the kind familiarity with which she treated her daughters, was happily contrasted by the interesting and respectful tenderness with which they evinced their affection; there seemed a delightful contest between these sisters, which should shew greater attention to gratify the desires, and more haste to execute the wishes of their adored mother, and it was difficult to distinguish which she loved most;

there was no discoverable difference, but in their caresses, which were more ardent or affectionate, consonantly to the difference of their characters: they were extremely opposite.

Miss de Rozieres, who was eight years older than her sister, was more reserved, without being less affable; her address was cold, but she relaxed proportionably to the esteem with which the object she was conversing with might inspire; her benevolence, which seemed to be concealed at the bottom of her heart, diffused itself o'er her countenance, and when she smiled, the restraint which the austerity of her manners inspired, vanished.

Her sister Henrietta, by her pleasing liveliness, seemed on the contrary, only desirous of banishing that reserve and coolness which generally accompanies a first interview; by her dignified and interesting forwardness, she appeared at first view to demand your heart, and promised her's in return; but with those who seemed inclined to abuse her frankness, she soon checked herself; a freezing coldness would succeed that brilliant warmth, which had before enlivened her countenance, and it was difficult

cult to recall the smiles and graces which the libertine had repelled.

Both these sisters possessed equal claims for beauty, their countenances were the portraits of their minds, although their characters were so essentially different. If noble and majestic beauty was entitled to a throne, few women could contend with Miss de Rozieres; and if gracefulness and animation have the power of subduing hearts, there were still fewer who could refuse their homage to the interesting and amiable Henrietta.

After the description of these sisters, and that of my person and character, if any circumstance could attach me to either of them, the conformity of taste and sentiments which I observed in the elder would have determined me in her favour, particularly as her mental endowments had obtained my preference.

I never could think that an intelligent and philosophick woman was a forced and unnatural character, or that it was right to reduce them to the sole exercise of pleasing and loving; always supposing them to possess equally elevated powers with men, I always found them adequate to the study of the sciences, as



to the practice of the highest virtues ; and under this favourable and just idea, I indispensably required the union of both, in the woman I might judge worthy of my affection, if I could ever think of sharing it with any other than my beloved parent.

With this disposition, it was a long time before I discovered that Henrietta was favourably inclined towards me ; whether the glory of conquering a man who seemed to avow eternal indifference to her sex, stimulated her vanity, or the freedom of my manner and frankness of my character captivated her esteem ; she discovered in her actions, and even in conversation, a decided desire of obtaining my approbation. As I never had in any circumstance that had occurred, any reason to deviate from manifesting the esteem I entertained for her excellent qualifications, she felt herself encouraged more than once by my praises, and conceiving I could never refuse my heart, where I had frequently bestowed my admiration, she attributed my rigid reserve to natural timidity, and that profound respect which she knew I had for her sex.

The

The marked attentions she repeatedly paid me, and the smile of pleasure with which I was invariably received, were more than sufficient to inform any one more exercised in the principles of gallantry than myself, of her attachment; but I was so far from thinking that my rude figure, and the indifference I evinced, particularly in what related to love, could attract the attention of an amiable girl; and I was so little disposed to reap the fruits of a gallant conquest, that I do not know whether I should even have listened to such a declaration as the forms of society prevent women from making.

The natural vivacity of the tender Henrietta would not permit her to remain long in uncertainty. Every flattering mark of esteem and admiration I willingly bestowed on her; and her vivacity often imparted to the most common civilities, a meaning which I never designed, and this arose from the satisfaction this interesting girl could not fail exciting by those ineffable graces which accompanied the most trivial actions.

Nevertheless I observed a silence so contrary to the favourable dispositions she supposed I felt, that nothing could  
reconcile

reconcile a contradiction rendered more inexplicable by my well known frankness. Notwithstanding my reserve, it might be thought I should sooner or later evince some symptom of attachment: a motion or look is sufficient to denote the most timid or discreet lover; but my unvaried equality and perfect tranquillity rendered my conduct so obscure, that the impatient Henrietta was resolved to be satisfied, let the consequence be what it might. She might, without the least vanity, be certain that the advantages with which nature had so amply endowed her, could not inspire disgust for her person. If I was in any way in opposition to her desires, it could only be in the article of marriage, that indissoluble knot which frightens those who do not see it encircled with those flowers, with which the fancy of those who voluntarily yield their liberty decorates the heavy chain.

The confidence which Mrs. de Rozieres had in those sentiments with which she had inspired her daughters, and in the purity of my principles, often induced her to leave them with me when her domestick concerns obliged her to quit us frequently; after having proposed  
some



some moral point, or philosophic question, she would leave us to discuss it by ourselves.

General conversations, when a variety of opinions are offered to elucidate the subject; may be more intelligent and richer in observation; but they are not so interesting, and leave less impression than those which pass between two persons equally interested in the topic. The dialogue is more lively, and the ideas cannot arrange themselves so well as when three or four interlocutors offer their opinions slowly and diffusely. Between two persons, a half sentence often conveys the speaker's full idea, but a rapid and continual succession of replies will not admit of that deliberate analysis, by which the fruit of an animated and interesting discussion is frequently lost; from such lively conversations also, when two persons have mutually expressed their sentiments, a pleasing intimacy often arises.

Mrs. de Rozieres, without any extraordinary portion of self-love, flattered herself that her daughters could not fail of attracting my praise in these disputes; under this idea, she frequently gave us opportunities for debate, in which

which they obtained equal advantage, whether they were defeated or victorious.

On the first opportunity, Henrietta turned the conversation on matrimony, in such a way as induced me to suspect it was not merely a simple question, upon which she wished to know my sentiments, but to obtain my opinion on such an important point by which she might regulate her conduct. In the situation in which she supposed I was, she might expect I should have discovered some agitation; but I discussed the inconveniences and advantages of the connubial state, with a degree of indifference totally inconsonant to her expectations; however, speaking of the qualities which each should possess in this holy and delightful union, I insensibly became so warm as might have inspired some hopes, had I not concluded by observing, that considering marriage as the highest degree of confidence and human friendship, I was determined never to think of it, from the impossibility I felt of suffering my father to hold but a second place in my heart.

Any

Any other woman possessing even fewer charms than the amiable Henrietta, would have considered a father but a contemptible rival, but the affection I had for mine was so well known, I may even say celebrated, that she could not but consider it as an invincible obstacle to her hopes.

Our conversation, or rather my discourse, had been concluded some time, for she never made any observation, and I expected her to have spoken, conceiving her silence to arise from her arranging her ideas, when she suddenly arose under the pretext of joining her mother, whom she heard talking, and left me.

Farewell.

---

LETTER V.

*The same to the same.*

CIRCUMSTANCES less prominent than those I related to you in my last, would have manifested Henrietta's views to any other than myself; even my father had often desired me to remark her evidently favourable inclinations towards me, but I always considered



dered these observations from him, as one of those pleasantries which he familiarly indulged himself in towards me, considering me more as an intimate friend than a son; from her affectionate and invariable attentions towards me, he had long perceived what kind of return she expected, but I always smiled at his suspicions, though more from incredulity than modesty.

At length it was impossible for me longer to doubt the amiable Henrietta's tender disposition. After having endeavoured for some time to conceal her melancholy, she could not resist the repeated and kind inquiries of a beloved mother, as to the cause. At first her only reply was tears; after some time, however, she confessed to her mother, who used the confidence reposed in her to Henrietta's satisfaction.

Mrs. de Rozieres, whose only wish was her daughter's happiness, approved her dear Henrietta's choice; she felicitated her on not being seduced by elegance of form, but by those good qualities which my conduct denoted I possessed, and considering my indifference to arise from my extreme and well-known

known reserve, she dispensed with those vain ceremonious forms so incompatible with esteem and friendship.

During a vacation, we agreed to pass some days at that estate which had served as an asylum to my grandfather; it was now a delightful spot, having retrieved it from those creditors who had possessed themselves of it, and though some years after, they sold it for the same price it had been valued to them, notwithstanding it was greatly improved.

Mrs. de Rozieres promised to visit us at *Bonnelles* (for so my father named it in honour to the memory of his benefactor.) We waited for some days in expectation of seeing her, when we were surprised by her coming without her daughters.

Without answering our repeated expressions of disappointments, but by common place thanks for our attention, she begged my father to favour her with a few minutes private conversation.

As I had never been excluded from any of the many private conversations she had with my father, on her secret concerns,

concerns, the present proceeding astonished me; but as it always was a principle with me to respect the wishes of my friends, and never to interfere in their affairs farther than they wished me, I retired, far from thinking I was the object of this mysterious visit.

The air of tranquillity and satisfaction which I remarked on Mrs. de Rozieres's countenance, assured me nothing disagreeable had occurred in her family, and therefore concluded she only came to intercede with my father for some one of her friends; but how great was my astonishment, when I saw her come from the library, where she had been with my father, and hasten towards her carriage; and when I said, I hoped soon to see her and her daughters, she replied, it depended on me, whether they returned the following day.

I assured her there was nothing I wished for more than their society. That is as the event may prove, she answered, stepping into her carriage, and beckoning my father to advance, she whispered something, which I supposed she had forgot to mention during their conference.

This



This behaviour greatly astonished me, inasmuch as I could not develope the cause. In the disposition she appeared, what could have prevented her from bringing her daughters, and oblige her to return so hastily, without the least refreshment after a journey of twenty miles. That I was in any way concerned never entered my mind. I was revolving what could be her motives for this extraordinary visit, when she having finished her conversation with my father, ordered the postillions to proceed, and nodded to me in such a way, as seemed to say, our visiting *Bonnelles* depends on you.

When the carriages disappeared, my father came up to me with a significant smile and air, which seemed equally inexplicable with Mrs. de Rozieres's answer; and taking me by the hand, led me, still smiling, to his library, where he seated me in the same place Mrs. de Rozieres had just quitted.

“ Well, Sir,” he said, jocularly,  
“ I find the ladies hearts are not safe  
“ in your society ; see what it is to be  
“ a fine young fellow, they win the  
“ affections of the fair, and then turn  
“ them ;

“ them ; of such conduct, however, I  
“ must confess I did not suspect you  
“ would ever have been guilty.”—

Here I took the liberty of interrupting my father, by begging him to speak more clearly. “ Ah, ah !” he ex-

claimed, laughing, “ I can excuse your

“ affecting ignorance, I see you are not

“ a finished man of gallantry ; dissimu-

“ lation is, however, superfluous, the

“ fair one acknowledges her defeat,

“ she yields herself to her conqueror’s

“ discretion, and I am confident he is

“ too generous to abuse his victim.”

I entreated him to drop this strain of irony, that it was incomprehensible, and really vexed me.

“ Come then, my friend,” he replied, affectionately pressing me in his arms, “ I will talk more seriously, ex-

“ cuse my gaiety, as it arises from the

“ satisfaction I at this moment feel,

“ that others love you as fondly as I

“ do, and that a young lady, as re-

“ spectable for her amiable qualities as

“ interesting from her loveliness, offers

“ you that happiness, which even my

“ unbounded affection could not af-

“ ford you.

“ The

“ The purport of Mrs. de Rozières’s  
“ visit was to offer to you her youngest  
“ and most amiable daughter, whose  
“ heart you already possess ; every  
“ thing I could wish for you, present  
“ themselves in this alliance, as I do  
“ not hold riches in any estimation, and  
“ it is with extreme satisfaction I find  
“ they esteem me so much, as not to  
“ conceive the superiority of fortune  
“ would be any obstacle on my part ;  
“ and as I do not suppose it can be any  
“ on your’s, I have only to ask whether  
“ you have any other objections to op-  
“ pose to an union extremely flattering  
“ to my wishes, as I am certain it will  
“ highly contribute to your felicity.”

“ My happiness can receive no ad-  
“ dition,” I exclaimed, throwing my-  
self on his bosom, “ and if my ten-  
“ derness and respect can constitute my  
“ father’s, I cannot think of seeking  
“ in a strange family for that felicity  
“ which I have enjoyed with him since  
“ my birth.”

“ Ah ! my dear son,” he replied,  
scarcely able to restrain the trembling  
tear from trickling down his cheek,  
“ I know your attachment, and foresaw



“ your refusal; but I despair not, of ob-  
“ taining your consent; be persuaded  
“ that my views of what may be con-  
“ tributary to your happiness, are not  
“ less correct than your’s, and your as-  
“ sent to the proposed union will sen-  
“ sibly augment mine. Far from  
“ weakening my love for you, you will  
“ farther strengthen it; it will be you  
“ only who I shall recognize in your off-  
“ spring, and they will be equally ob-  
“ jects of my care and affection. You  
“ will never be one moment from me;  
“ for in your absence I shall always  
“ find myself embosomed with living  
“ images of my dearly beloved son:  
“ Why then, my best friend, will you  
“ deprive me of that happiness you have  
“ the power of bestowing? Why re-  
“ nounce the opportunity of receiv-  
“ ing from your children such endear-  
“ ing attentions as you shew me?  
“ Their mother is affectionate as your-  
“ self, and their hearts formed from  
“ such pure fondness, will never be less  
“ kind than their parents; my heart  
“ voluptuously dilates and expands at  
“ the flattering idea: you see my tears,  
“ can you resist the delicious sentiment  
“ that excites them?”

My

My father, who was seated on the arm of the sofa on which he had made me sit, had, at the conclusion of his speech, in that attitude pressed me to his bosom; much affected by the tenderness of his manner, I started from his arms to fling myself at his feet; the sofa thus losing its equilibrium, tilted upwards; wishing to replace it, my foot slipped and I fell, which precipitated my father's fall, and dragging the sofa with us, the elbow struck him on the head, and gave him a wound, which covered him with blood.

At seeing his blood, mine seemed to freeze in my veins, I could not raise my voice to call for assistance, and my strength failing me, I could not raise him up—O Heaven!—O just God!—aid the best beloved of fathers—the one most worthy of your assistance.

I remained fixt to the spot where my father lay extended without sense or motion; happily the noise of our falling was heard, and the domesticks hastened to the relief of their revered master; their screams roused him, and sensible of their unfeigned attachment, he assured them he was not in pain, though

he was much stunned. As to me I still remained motionless with fright, and my father would not suffer them to attend to him until he was convinced I was unhurt, neither would he suffer a surgeon to be sent for until I was so far recovered as to assure him I had received no injury, but from my apprehensions for his safety. His wound, though large, was not dangerous; but the alarm I had sustained had so totally deranged me, that I was seized with a fever soon after I had seen my father put to bed. I could not, however, quit him to go to mine, but had one brought into his chamber, where I remained more uneasy at what might be the consequences of this accident to him, than to me.

Neither of us, however, experienced any lasting ill effect; the sweet satisfaction of being together, was like a delicious balm, which restored us both by the following evening, leaving no other traces of the event, than a band on his forehead, and a degree of paleness on my countenance.

My father having promised Mrs. de Rozieres a speedy answer, and not now being able to write, he sent a servant with



with a verbal message, purporting, that a trifling accident had occurred soon after she left him, which deterred him from terminating the business she had entrusted to him; but this affectionate servant, still full of alarm for the safety of his master, described him to be in very imminent danger. Mrs. de Rozieres, frightened at this account, communicated the sorrowful intelligence to her daughters: they immediately determined to come to us, and offer us every attention and assistance within the limits of their power.

The tender Henrietta was extremely urgent to adopt this generous resolution, and her sister consented to it with equal eagerness, for reasons which I shall hereafter explain.

The accident which had suspended my father's tender solicitations, appeared to him as an event that should determine me to yield to his designs; but it had produced a very different effect on my mind, in rendering him more dear to me, and consequently strengthening my resolution of never separating from him; under this idea, I received Mrs.

de Rozieres and her daughters with great embarrassment.

The amiable Henrietta, equally disconcerted with myself, uttered some vague sentences, which she frequently repeated as expressive of her alarm; her voice then totally failed her, and her lips moved without articulating what her eyes would have expressed, had they not been cast down, fearful they should explain that embarrassment, which was already sufficiently evident from her troubled air.

When seated, the timid girl was not more at her ease, she turned her bracelet round, took it off, then put it on again; took out her pocket book, opened and shut it at least ten times in as many minutes. I was not less perturbed, and being unable to join in the conversation but by monosyllables, I retired to the window, where, with my fingers, I traced on the glass some characters as confused as my ideas.

If the dinner being announced interrupted this painful silence, it served to augment my embarrassment, by the opportunity it gave the lovely Henrietta  
of

of shewing me her refined attention; her anxiety to prevent me any trouble, the interesting manner in which she offered me every thing I seemed to want or wish, and her evident uneasiness at my not eating, excited, if I may be allowed the term, a painful though pleasing confusion, which suffused my countenance with a deep blush.

Such unmerited kindness, as I conceived it, engaged my heart, and tears of gratitude often started to my eyes. My father, who watched my least motion, considered my agitation as the dawn of my happiness; his conversation, purposely to encourage me, was on the felicity that must result from an union of equal tenderness; but my heart felt not those lively emotions, those delicious transports, which constitute the charms of mutual love; and the description of a fond and intimate union which my father painted in the most glowing colours, in order to seduce me, served but to fortify my resolution, as the sentiments so attractively depicted were widely different to those my heart acknowledged.



If the whole of my fortune would have procured the happiness of the tender Henrietta, I should not have hesitated one moment in sacrificing it to her; but was I not right to refuse changing the happy and tranquil state in which I lived, for one which only offered me, privations without reward, and fears without hopes?

This idea baffled all my father's attempts to excite a more favourable disposition in my bosom towards Henrietta: and dreading the explanation which I expected would take place after dinner, I suddenly quitted the table, and went to my own room, where I locked myself in, resolved not to answer any one who might knock at the door to inquire for me: several came without obtaining any reply, and at length my father, fearful I was not well, but I assured him to the contrary, without letting him in.

He could not now avoid communicating to Mrs. de Rozieres the dislike I entertained to marriage, and accompanying this species of refusal, with expressing his high opinion of her daughter.

ter, and how greatly I thought myself flattered by her attachment, concluded by earnestly intreating she would not relinquish the alliance, as it was the nearest wish of his heart.

Any other person of less mildness and patience than Mrs. de Rozieres, would have been affronted with my father's speech, which, in fact, was little short of an absolute refusal. So situated, what could be the conduct of her and her daughters while with us, reduced as it were, to objects of our pity. Their charms, birth, and excellent qualifications, should certainly have exempted them from such humiliation; but Mrs. de Rozieres, less haughty, than sensible, evinced more regret than anger at my indifference, and knowing from her daughter's character, that she would not have avowed her passion, had she not been strongly attached, could not determine to renounce pursuing the object of her happiness, without employing every possible means she could devise to interest a heart, which she knew possessed a high degree of sensibility.

My father, building his hopes on the same foundation, which determined my

refusal, that is, my extreme affection for him, related what had passed between us, and this interesting recital, served to heighten their wishes for an alliance; Mrs. de Rozieres in particular was so affected, that she exclaimed in a kind of transport: "No, no; such  
" a generous and affectionate heart  
" can never consent to render an amiable girl unhappy, and of whom he  
" never expressed the least repugnance;  
" our reiterated solicitations and friendly exertions will, sooner or later,  
" gain his assent. Excellent young  
" man, the resistance which he manifests, will render me more ardent in  
" my endeavours to subdue him; it is  
" your happiness that we wish for, and  
" we will obtain it for you, in despite  
" of your opposition; so exemplary a  
" a son must make an exemplary husband, and in your wife's heart you  
" will find treasures of tenderness that  
" will afford you immeasurable felicity;  
" and if the friendship of all my family  
" can add any thing, nothing will be  
" wanting to render your happiness  
" complete."

O, the



O, the inexpressible inconclusiveness of the human heart and mind! I forcibly felt how ridiculous my absence from the company must make me appear, and the impropriety of my conduct towards a respectable family who had laden me with favours, who in return, at least, deserved sincerity and civility from me. I was, therefore, resolved to ask Mrs. de Rozieres's pardon, though I knew it was from such a woman only that I could expect it. The high tone in which she was speaking, made me fear, and with justice, that she was angry at my refusal; in order to ascertain this, I stooped at my door to listen, and hearing them lavish the greatest praises, I was so affected, that I made but one leap down the stairs, and in a moment was at their feet.

If at this moment the amiable Henrietta had been present, all my resolutions would have vanished. I wept profusely when I attempted to speak to Mrs. de Rozieres; my tears, however, afforded but little relief to my swollen heart; my father came up to me, in the most affectionate manner; my attachment to him then recurred in full force,

and destroyed all those blossoms of hope, which my behaviour might have engendered in Mrs. de Rozieres's bosom; feeling myself greatly relieved, I addressed her in the warmest language of friendship and gratitude, and swore never to have any other wife but her daughter, if I could ever resolve to share my tenderness for my father with any other object; that it would require a long time to familiarize me with such a separation, as at that moment the idea of it only racked my heart.

“ Dear Boncœur, my dear son, for  
“ such you will be sooner than you are  
“ aware of,” replied Mrs. de Rozieres, taking me by the hand, “ we must  
“ compel you to love a girl, whom I  
“ may presume to call lovely and amiable, although she is mine; a girl,  
“ whose mental qualifications, I have  
“ frequently heard you admire, who  
“ has long enjoyed your esteem, and  
“ who now merits your affection, from  
“ the candid avowal of her attachment;  
“ is a heart like your's formed for  
“ gratitude? You act contrary to the  
“ dictates of nature, and your natural  
“ disposition, which inclines you to  
“ love

“ love and gratitude ; you are not  
“ aware that the affections of the soul,  
“ are strengthened, and that love aug-  
“ ments by multiplying its objects ;  
“ you fly from the happiness at which  
“ you aim, by false ideas ; and injure  
“ that of persons the most dear to you ;  
“ by your refusal you afflict a father  
“ who is the motive ; you give pain to  
“ a mother and a friend, who would  
“ sacrifice a portion of her blood to  
“ make you happy, and you destroy  
“ for ever the peace of mind of a young  
“ woman who is worthy of all your  
“ tenderness, if it was only in return  
“ for that she has for you. Must, then,  
“ such a heart as your’s be solicited to  
“ render the three persons most dear to  
“ you on earth, happy ? Is it neces-  
“ sary to subdue your determination,  
“ that I should, with my daughter, on  
“ our knees—but I see you are af-  
“ fected.”

“ O Heaven ! ” I exclaimed, “ sooner  
“ would I die at your feet, than suffer  
“ such derogatory proceedings ; ” and  
I flung myself on the ground, protest-  
ing I would sooner remain prostrate  
for



for ever, than see an humiliation that would reflect so much shame on me.

My father, conceiving this a favourable moment, quitted the room without saying a word, and presently returned, holding the hand of the charming Henrietta.

“ The blushing rose-bud, in its native bed,

“ By zephyrs fann’d, and murm’ring fountains  
fed,

“ In June’s gay morn, that scents the ambient  
“ air,

“ Was not more sweet, more innocent, or fair.”

I never recollect to have seen a more interesting object, than her timidity and modesty conspired to form. I had also seen her take her handkerchief from her eyes as she came into the room. The dear girl affected a firmness when she first came in, which immediately left her on seeing me at her mother’s knees, whose cheeks were bathed with tears; she also kneeled, and her’s flowed as abundantly as our’s. My father stood behind us, opposite to Mrs. de Rozieres, who smiled on him satisfaction through her tears. At length, unable to resist his feelings, he pushed me gently with his hand to give him room, and kneeling  
on

on one knee, between us, he took Henrietta's and my hand, put them in Mrs. de Rozieres's, and pressing them with fond ardour between his, he said, looking at us alternately, " will either of you ever feel the excess of joy that you at this moment excite in my bosom?"

After kissing Henrietta's hand as a token of approbation, I withdrew mine, and embraced him with a sigh, that at once expressed the pleasure I experienced in contributing to his satisfaction, and the regret I felt for having yielded a place in my heart to another object.

Henrietta also embraced her mother, and my father affectionately pressed Mrs. de Rozieres's hand. At this moment an idea darted into my mind, which seemed of heavenly inspiration. I took their hands, in order to keep them together during the proposition I had to make. " What," I exclaimed, " is there to prevent a double knot which will unite us still more closely?— Why should you deprive yourselves of that happiness, which you have so anxiously wished for me? Do you conceive that which you have

“ have bestowed on us cannot be still  
“ greater? I know the esteem and  
“ friendship you have for each other,  
“ and two hearts joined by such re-  
“ spectable ties, will soon be united by  
“ more tender sentiments, they only  
“ require to be brought near each other,  
“ to bloom in the luxuriance of mu-  
“ tual love.”

Henrietta, in the plenitude of happiness ardently wished all around her so, and fondly embracing her mother, endeavoured to persuade her to listen to a proposition, which she thought would be productive of reciprocal happiness.

Mrs. de Rozieres smiled at our ardour, and my father observed a most rigid silence, which seemed to indicate his willingness. I had frequently heard him extol Mrs. de Rozieres's superior qualifications, and I had often heard her praise my father in the warmest terms. Between two persons of their age, I conceived esteem and confidence sufficient grounds for happiness in the connubial state; the satisfaction they evinced, seemed to announce a favourable issue to my project. Their mutual silence I  
attri-



attributed to surprise, when Mrs. de Rozieres broke it with a smile, that appeared a formal avowal of her consent; Henrietta and myself congratulated each other on our success, my father took Mrs. de Rozieres's hands, and impressed them with the most respectful kisses.

— After requesting us to suspend our endearments, and applauses, Mrs. de Rozieres begged us to listen to her.—

“ Your proposal, my children, is certainly extremely flattering to me, and  
“ I would consent to it with joy, if my  
“ duty as a mother did not compel me  
“ to prefer establishing my daughter's  
“ to my own immediate satisfaction,  
“ and if your father does not despise  
“ my eldest daughter, I pledge myself  
“ he will find her to possess every qualification to render their union agreeable.”

My father, compelled to explain himself on two propositions so unexpected and opposite to each other, replied, with some embarrassment,—that the offer, which he accepted with the most sincere gratitude, was the only consolation to soften the refusal with  
which

which it was accompanied, and the recompense for the loss of what he knew to be invaluable, although he had never indulged himself till that moment with the hopes of possession, fearful of forming rash vows; yet he did not think himself worthy of obtaining —

“ A truce to your compliments and  
“ modesty,” exclaimed Mrs. de Rozieres, “ although my eldest daughter,  
“ who is more reserved than Henrietta,  
“ has not confided her sentiments to  
“ me, I can venture to say, they have  
“ long been favourable to you; I know  
“ my daughter’s attachment to solid  
“ merit, and your brilliant virtues are  
“ sufficient to make her desirous of  
“ your alliance, had she not found in  
“ your person, every thing that can  
“ render an object agreeable and interesting: the difference in your ages  
“ is nothing more than what prudence  
“ may require between the two sexes.  
“ And you, my son,” addressing herself to me, “ without losing a mother,  
“ whose affection for you cannot be  
“ greater, will find a second in a sister,  
“ and this double title cannot fail of  
“ rendering you still more dear. How  
“ de-

“ delightful will be the sentiments that  
“ spring from the combined sources of  
“ love, friendship, and gratitude? What  
“ bonds more tender can unite two fa-  
“ milies already connected by esteem?

“ The felicity I have depicted, and  
“ which your hearts are formed to feel  
“ as strongly as mine, may be realized  
“ within an hour. I ask not longer  
“ time to determine my daughter; it  
“ may, indeed, be sooner: for I have  
“ only to inform her of our projects,  
“ for her to desire the execution of  
“ them. Do you consent, my dear  
“ friend? If I have not yet persuaded  
“ you, I beg your consent in your son’s  
“ name, who is equally desirous of the  
“ event.”

At this moment I knelt to my father, who, raising me with one hand, with the other took Mrs. de Rozieres’s and pressed it to his lips with an ardency that declared his consent without the concurrence of his voice.

Mrs. de Rozieres immediately arose, and promising to return soon, she left us three, in silent admiration of an event which greatly astonished us, though no one but ourselves had contributed to it.

My



My father told me, with his usual tenderness, that, notwithstanding he was deeply conscious of the happiness of being Miss de Rozieres's husband, that of becoming my brother was not forgotten, as it gave me a stronger title to that equality of affection in which we had ever lived, and he hoped would now, if possible, be augmented. The time that Mrs. de Rozieres was absent was passed in mutual embraces and expressions of everlasting attachment to each other. On her return, she desired my father to follow her, adding, she should have brought her daughter with her, if she had not thought it better (smiling significantly at Henrietta and me) to conduct him to her with whom he might commune without interruption on a subject that merited and required their reciprocal attention.

The happiness I felt on my father's approaching felicity, added to what I experienced from my own situation, occasioned such delightful sensations in my bosom, as I never before or have since felt: the tender Henrietta conceiving my expressions of joy to arise solely from my union with her, heightened

ened them by her caresses, and further interested my feelings by describing the hopes and fears she had experienced. Softened almost to infant tenderness, I resolved at that moment to reward the anxiety she had suffered by the most unremitting attentions and invariable affection.

Farewell.

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LETTER VI.

*The same to the same.*

SO pleasingly did several hours pass in mutual protestations of love and esteem, that I never perceived my father was absent until Mrs. de Rozieres's return without him; I felt some degree of shame for having been so long without inquiring after him, and considering this neglect as the necessary effect of my new engagement, I could not repress a certain sensation of chagrin, and which I believe manifested itself by my manner. One moment, said I to myself, has made me guilty of ingratitude! what will be the effect when the continued caresses and attention of an amiable

able and interesting woman shall court return? They will absorb every sentiment of gratitude, and yielding to the pleasures of love, I shall basely betray the most sacred duty of humanity.

O strange error of the human mind! that an excess of the most august virtues should lead the heart of sensibility from right. Filial piety had obliterated every other affection from my bosom, and I thought I must be a bad husband to be a good son, as if all our duties were not equal, and true virtue inconsistent with fulfilling them.

The silent reflections in which I had indulged myself, had given me an air of constraint, which was dispelled by the entrance of my father with Mifs de Rozieres. The satisfaction which beamed from his eyes, soon chased from my heart the regret I had began to feel at my engagement, and the evidence of his happiness, made me enjoy the reality of mine.

Mifs de Rozieres, far from offering the least opposition to her mother's proposal, received it with a satisfaction that plainly indicated, it was not the first time the idea had presented itself to her mind.



mind in an agreeable form. In fact, the sterling nobleness of her sentiments had often led her to think it would be a distinguished honour to be the wife of a man, whose virtues, integrity, and abilities, had gained him eminence; who also enjoyed the public confidence, and universal esteem; who possessed the most distinguished favour at court, and filled one of the most honourable situations of the government.

Though these sentiments partook more of ambition than love, her union with my father promised happiness. A woman impressed with admiration of her husband, will endeavour to merit his esteem, and would not upon any consideration commit an action to displease him.

On seeing Miss de Rozieres, we went up to her and congratulated her by the name of our mother: she assured us she only took that name, as the means of augmenting, if possible, the affection she already entertained for us; and we declared we could not bestow that endearing title more conformable to the sentiments of our heart. "Then," exclaimed my father, embracing us  
3 with

with the most thrilling ardour, “with-  
“out distinguishing the different bonds  
“which unite us this day, let us form  
“so close a chain, that it may appear  
“as if we possessed but one soul.”

Mrs. de Rozieres, who now reaped the fruits of her exemplary care and patience, felicitated herself on having provided for both her daughters so advantageously, and addressed herself to them, assuring them, that she felt the most delightful satisfaction, in knowing from their natural dispositions, that they would constitute the happiness of those gentlemen to whom they were going to be united.

Thus circumstanced, our thoughts were almost solely employed in planning a festival, that should manifest our delight on the union it was to consecrate; and the different projects we suggested, added to the pleasure we each promised ourselves.

The moment our ideas were concentrated to one point, the care of executing them was given to me, and I immediately departed, as much to make the necessary arrangements, as to obviate delay, which was mutually irksome

some. After listening to my father and Mrs. de Rozieres's intreaties to be quick, in which I was as much interested as they, and receiving the caresses of both sisters in a way that declared their impatience, I mounted my horse and set off.

I had not proceeded above a mile, when I met an officer also on horseback, who inquired of me if he was in the road to *Bonnelles*? upon my replying in the affirmative, he bowed, and rode off. When he had left me, I regretted not having asked him, whether I could have rendered him any service at the chateau, when supposing I was the person he wanted, I saw him riding towards me in full gallop, and, on coming near, he asked if I was not Mr. de Boncœur, son to the Attorney-general of —?

I assured him I was, and though some business of importance called me from *Bonnelles*, I should be extremely happy if I could be useful to him there.

He made no reply to this offer, but desired me to follow him, that my servant who was with me, might not hear what he had to say. When we had got to some little distance he stopt, and



looking at me with a menacing air, said,  
“ you are then, Sir, Mr. de Boncœur ? ”  
—I nodded assent.

“ Then, Sir, the only service I wish  
“ from you is, to give me immediate  
“ satisfaction for the contempt with  
“ which you have treated my sister after  
“ basely seducing her affection, do you  
“ suppose that her brother, who now  
“ speaks to you, would tamely suffer  
“ such insult? Come, Sir, the situation  
“ is favourable, you have grossly of-  
“ fended me in my sister’s person; I  
“ flatter myself you will not refuse me  
“ honourable reparation, and that, there  
“ may be no advantage on either side,  
“ I beg you will choose one of those  
“ pistols, (presenting me with a pair)  
“ and —————

“ That cannot be,” I interrupted  
him with a smile, “ the way to merit  
“ those kindnesses, with which your  
“ sister honours me, is not to present  
“ myself before her covered with her  
“ brother’s blood, and I doubt whe-  
“ ther you would be favourably re-  
“ ceived, for making her a widow be-  
“ fore she is married.” — “ What, Sir ! ”  
he exclaimed — “ Yes, Sir, and mar-  
“ ried

“ ried to a man, who, though he feels  
“ extremely flattered by being your  
“ brother, would still think himself  
“ more so, by calling you his friend.”

“ Do not deceive me,” he said,  
looking stedfastly at me.

“ I never, Sir, deceived any one;  
“ and it is not to save my life, that I  
“ would utter the first falsehood that  
“ ever escaped my lips; it is not,  
“ however, in such danger as you seem  
“ to think, and I shall not hesitate de-  
“ fending it against any one, even the  
“ brother of my beloved Henrietta.”

The firmness and tranquillity with which I made this reply, left him without doubt of my sincerity; he quickly dismounted, I did the same, and we embraced as brothers, he begging me to pardon his angry haste, and me in assuring him it would only add to the friendship which I had destined for him, since he had proved the warm attachment he had to his sister.

My servant, who had come near to us, thinking, from the threatening manner of Mr. de Rozieres, what would be the result, now joined us, upon my beckoning to him. We remounted

our horses to return to the chateau, wishing to introduce him myself: as we rode on I asked him what could have impelled him to his late conduct: he informed me thus;—

“ There has always existed, between  
“ Henrietta and myself, an attachment  
“ arising more from friendship than  
“ consanguinity. The reserved disposition of my eldest sister was inimical  
“ to those effusions which two communicative souls naturally indulge  
“ themselves in, and a confidence being  
“ thus necessarily established, from our  
“ earliest infancy, we have never since  
“ concealed any thing from each  
“ other.

“ Thus disposed, Henrietta never  
“ withheld from me the progress you  
“ made in her affection. Her frequent  
“ letters informed me of her hopes and  
“ fears, and though I could never perceive in the accounts she gave of  
“ your conduct towards her, any thing  
“ that deserved the least reproach, my  
“ affection for this beloved sister would  
“ not permit me to read her last letter  
“ with indifference; the alarms of a  
“ fond heart were so feelingly delineated

“ and



“ated, that they could not fail of exciting an interest in the most indifferent reader.”

“The sudden return of her mother without communicating her propositions to you, and the time your father required to reply, deprived her of hope, and my natural impatience made me consider it as a refusal. Not perceiving any thing in our family, or in my sister’s person that merited disdain, I asked leave of absence for eight days, that I might learn your reason for rejecting our alliance; it is true I had none to compel you to its acceptance, and now as you are going to be my brother, I beg you will forget what has passed, and pardon a proceeding I cannot defend, but on the principle of seeing you so tranquil and content, when I imagined my sister in tears and despair; on the contrary, I am now going to see her happy and contented, and as a remuneration for my sincere attachment to her, I shall beg her to obtain my pardon for the fault, which she only was the cause of my committing.”

I offered him my hand, and, calling him brother, assured him no mediator was required to obtain him my friendship, he possessed it from that moment and should ever; I only wished to enjoy his in return.

We had now arrived at the chateau, where my returning so quickly was not expected, and being accompanied by a gentleman occasioned still greater astonishment. His, however, was not less, when he was informed of the double alliance, a subject on which I had not spoken, and which he considered as a small punishment for his behaviour to me. I assured him my design was only to render the intelligence more agreeable to him, by reserving it for the communication of those who certainly must be infinitely more dear to him than me.

It was eagerly asked by all in what his misconduct towards me consisted? His embarrassment spoke the shame he felt for his violence, but the cause was too good to conceal it; and I freely undertook to describe it, hoping to affect my dear Henrietta's modesty less than he would, who certainly would feel some confusion.

fusion on the recital. Notwithstanding my endeavours to the contrary, she blushed frequently, betrayed much confusion and embarrassment, which, however, was considerably heightened by her mother and sister's smiling; at length her tenderness subdued her shame, and she assured me she was happy this opportunity had offered of my obtaining a knowledge of the sentiments she had long entertained for me.

I flung myself at her feet, and swore to merit her affection, by giving her invariably the most incontestable proofs of mine.

"Love's rising ray, and youth's seductive dye,  
"Glow'd on her cheeks, and sparkl'd in her eye."

My father, unwilling to appear less conscious of his happiness than I did, assumed the same attitude, and protested to his future wife, that nothing should ever supersede his endeavours to render her felicitous. Mr. de Rozieres, who loved his sisters to an uncommon degree, was softened even into tears with the joy he felt at their situation, and protested that it was impossible for us to be equalled in generosity; he added,



that the extreme difference of our fortunes must ever have deterred his sisters from accepting such a favourable alliance, and, continued he, with that noble spirit and candour which formed the basis of his character, "I will now  
" take the oaths of the order of Malta,  
" that my sisters may enjoy all my fortune, by which they will become  
" more worthy of an alliance, too advantageous without such aid."

This excessive generosity was equally felt by us all, but neither of us were disposed to accept of it. We assured him, that his offer manifested the sterling nobleness of mind, but it was otherways useless, as from that moment we entreated him to consider our riches as his.

[Mrs. de Rozieres, though extremely affected by this excellent trait of her son's disposition, could take no part in this disinterested contest of offers and refusals: her daughters and myself declared our firm intentions of not accepting it: her son on the other hand protested he would not relinquish his resolution, as it was the only mode of acquitting his family toward us, and I observed, he would soon have been

as

as angry at our not accepting his fortune, as he had before been when he thought I would not marry his sister.

In vain my father represented to him the duty he owed to his distinguished birth, and the descendants of an illustrious house: he replied, it was not possible to injure those who were not born, nor ever would be.

“ But those who live and love you,  
“ my dear Rozieres,” I rejoined, embracing him, “ would you not wish to  
“ please them? And you can never do  
“ it more than by retaining the whole  
“ of that fortune you would generously  
“ bestow on them. The approaching  
“ happy marriages of your sisters  
“ has inebriated you with joy, and  
“ why would you deprive them of a  
“ similar pleasure, but uniting yourself  
“ to an amiable woman.”

At length, by reasoning and caresses, we succeeded in calming his generous anger, on condition that his sisters, contrary to the custom of the country, should share his fortune equally.

That I might have an opportunity of requiting him, I wished my sister to renounce the project she had formed of

consecrating her life to religion : a terrible, resolution, which I feared arose more from her not being able to attract attention in the world, owing to the devastation which disease had made on her youth and beauty, than from a preference to religious duties, and

————— “ thereby to learn  
 “ True patience, and to temper joy with fear  
 “ And pious sorrow—————”

In the transports of matrimonial fondness, I wished for some affectionate relative to offer Mr. de Rozieres to render our happiness complete.

In order to hasten the preparations for our approaching festivity, I quitted *Bonnelles* immediately after dinner, and de Rozieres accompanied me to—— to assist me in terminating more speedily, the necessary business and formalities which ever precede marriages.

In three days they were concluded, and the Bishop of ———, who immediately gave the licences, on being informed of the double marriage, said, he should be highly flattered to perform the ceremony. I thanked him for his kindness, but assured him my father had



had promised the respectable Curate who had protected him in his infancy, and to whose first care he was indebted for his present rank and fortune.

At *Bonnelles*, my father had been attentive to every necessary, and the celebration of our nuptials took place the morning following our return. We proceeded to the church in the highest spirits, and our pleasure was heightened by the general joy we seemed to excite in the accompanying peasantry. Yet on approaching the altar, I felt a deadly coldness at my heart, a sudden shivering seized every part of my frame, and I was obliged to hide my face with my handkerchief, fearful of discovering my situation. A look from my father, whose countenance was brightened with joy, at once dispelled my emotion, and I pronounced the solemn oath of loving her whom Heaven had destined for my wife, for ever, with an ardour that brought tears to my dear Henrietta's eyes; I felt them start into mine, and the surrounding spectators of our happiness, joined in the humid tribute.

Under such favourable auspices, our only hope was that we might long enjoy that felicity the sacred union promised.

Farewell.

LETTER VII.

*The same to the same.*

THE sensations which our novel situation necessarily excited, the publick entertainments with which our union was celebrated, and the congratulations of our friends lasted several days; it was therefore necessary this tumult should be succeeded by order, which by regulating our duties, our occupations, and our pleasures, might ensure us that tranquillity and happiness, congenial to our dispositions.

Till this period my youth had been employed in cultivating my mind, and forming my heart; in studying mankind and myself. It was now time to reap the fruits of my application, and the inestimable and valuable instructions I had received from my father. My resolution was to make the happiness of

of others my principal concern, and to consecrate my fortune and abilities to the service of mankind, whom I considered indiscriminately as brothers, only giving the preference to the most unfortunate and the most virtuous ; but this rule, which is the basis of the duties of humanity, presented in itself more distinct occupations, and more immediate duties. I was obliged to assume what is called, some character in the world.

The profound peace which reigned throughout Europe, and which seemed likely to be of long duration, prevented me from pursuing that career in which my ancestors had acquired distinction at the expense of their blood. The law, my father did not wish me to follow. Often has he wept at the severe sentences he has been obliged to pronounce on unfortunate criminals. What situation was I to fill in society ?

By what unfortunate fatality is it, that men are so corrupt, and thus render the most sacred things contemptible ! What respectable employ is there for an honest man, whose purity of heart will not suffer him to consent to become an accom-



accomplice in the enormities which he daily witnesses. Humanity revolts at the cruelties of war, the injustice exercised under the authority of the laws. The taxes destined, for the benefit of the state, are become the patrimony of a few individuals, artifice is employed for the interest of princes under the name of politicks, and corruption has reared its polluted head in the sanctuary of religion; avarice, fraud, imposture, and envy contend with each other at the feet of the altar; what asylum then remains for virtue? it is exiled to the wise man's heart, who cultivates it in peace, and weeping at the degraded state of human nature, employs himself in doing what little good is in his power.

My father, from the situation he held, had frequent opportunities of making similar reflections; he therefore did not press me to determine on a situation. Urged, however, by our friends, he proposed my buying a place about the king's person, in the exercise of which I might have an opportunity of obtaining his confidence, and thereby procure the means of serving my friends, and those whom injustice or misused  
power

power too often oblige to have recourse to their Sovereign.

I adopted this plan without repugnance, though not without some displeasure, as it would oblige me for several months in the year to leave my family, and live in the gay world, of which I did not entertain the most favourable idea. My father, who was never at court but on certain days to pay his respects to the King, with whom he was in high favour, had given me but a vague knowledge of its pleasures and amusements. I however purchased the situation, and the time for my service being near, I left my dear Henrietta to fulfill my new duties.

My wife had already given me the title of father, and though mine was not so happy, his joy was unbounded at having a grandson, whose father was now more than ever the object of his tenderest affections. My wife's attachment increased daily, and though I did not experience that inebriation which displays the excess of the passions, I felt the most sincere and delicate gratitude, and never parted from her but with tears.

Not-

Notwithstanding the ideas I had formed of Paris and Versailles, I was astonished when I first saw them; but astonishment was the only effect they produced on me. I did not meet more contemptible objects than are found elsewhere; on the contrary, the men were as reasonable, the women more amiable and better informed than any I had yet seen, and in an intercourse with them I felt the effect of reciprocal complaisance, and a more unrestrained and easier politeness, than was to be found in the provinces.

With respect to their manners, as I never frequented any societies but those of distinction, I found them more pure and elegant than I had been accustomed to, and having discarded that austerity, which is often the effect of pride, at an early period of life; I was careful not to be too severe on some free expressions in conversation, which may be considered more as an amusement in society, than the consequence of a corrupt age.

My father in his letters to me approved of my conduct, and recommended me to be very reserved, which  
was



was not difficult for me to observe, as I had no secrets to confide, nor one friend that I would willingly have entrusted. The letters from my wife and mother-in-law were replete with the warmest expressions of attachment. In one that I received from my father he congratulated me on not having embraced the profession of the law, and thereby having avoided the pangs of conscience he often suffered from the necessity of sometimes wounding justice to support the authority of the laws; he complained bitterly of having been obliged to give an unfavourable verdict against an unfortunate lady whose merit and graces he highly extolled.

Having been much engaged in different excursions, which the King had taken for several days, I had had no opportunity of answering this letter of my father's, when I received the following:

“ It is only from you, my dear son,  
“ that I can obtain an alleviation to the  
“ sorrow with which my heart is op-  
“ pressed; the cruel injustice of the ver-  
“ dict which I mentioned to you, has  
“ deeply wounded my feelings, and I  
“ have been inclined more than once to  
“ renounce

“ renounce a ministration now become  
“ so iniquitous. There is not one mem-  
“ ber of the Parliament that has the least  
“ doubts of Mrs. de Charmes’s just  
“ pretensions and sacred rights, yet were  
“ we compelled to condemn her to the  
“ most humiliating opprobrium, and  
“ the most wretched poverty.

“ The old Duke de ———, whom  
“ you no doubt have heard spoken of,  
“ after having passed the first years of  
“ his life in extreme debauchery, so  
“ much so, as to have been publicly  
“ reprobated at court; at length re-  
“ nounced his guilty habits; but his  
“ past conduct having lost him the  
“ publick confidence, he was obliged  
“ to retire, laden with general con-  
“ tempt, to his seat at C——.

“ Thus universally despised and  
“ driven from society, one woman who  
“ had constantly pitied his errors, fear-  
“ ful despair might succeed this severe  
“ punishment; and feeling more com-  
“ passion for his foibles than disgust  
“ for those faults he seemed to have  
“ really relinquished, was resolved to  
“ contribute to support him in his new  
“ project of seclusion and reform;  
“ and

“ and treating him with that insinua-  
“ ting tenderness natural to the fair sex,  
“ revived his fallen strength, insensi-  
“ bly inspired him with a love of vir-  
“ tue, and consequently the practice of  
“ it soon followed.

“ The Duke, roused as it were from  
“ a long and painful lethargy, felt for  
“ the first time in his life the pure  
“ and voluptuous pleasures arising from  
“ a virtuous action. Impressed with a  
“ just and lively gratitude to her to  
“ whom he was indebted for the  
“ change, he wished to consecrate the  
“ remainder of his days to her. But  
“ this woman, equally disinterested  
“ as virtuous, refused an alliance to  
“ which she did not think herself en-  
“ titled, but by his generosity. At  
“ length yielding to the Duke's pref-  
“ ering solicitations, and perhaps to the  
“ affection she felt for the man she had  
“ restored to virtue, consented to a secret  
“ marriage, a step which her husband's  
“ high rank rendered necessary, al-  
“ though she was also of distinguished  
“ birth; but owing to the high con-  
“ nections of her husband, she con-  
“ sented to deprive herself of the title  
“ of his wife, and conscious of the  
“ pro-



“ propriety of her conduct, she passed  
“ several years tranquilly.

“ Her husband dying suddenly, and  
“ without declaring his marriage, the  
“ Duke’s relations took advantage of  
“ the circumstance, destroyed every  
“ trace that might substantiate an union  
“ to which they were indebted for  
“ their relations reform, and the con-  
“ servation of those riches that were  
“ the object of their avidity; the cer-  
“ tificate of the marriage was certainly  
“ destroyed by their authority; the  
“ witnesses were kept out of the way  
“ by their threats or bounty; and Mrs.  
“ de Charmes remaining without  
“ proofs of her right, or support to  
“ her innocence, has become the victim  
“ of the avarice and craftiness of her  
“ husband’s inheritors; whom she has  
“ furnished with arms against herself  
“ by her disinterestedness and noble  
“ generosity.

“ Outrage has been added to injus-  
“ tice, and the most odious imputa-  
“ tions have been lavished upon this re-  
“ spectable woman, by those ungrate-  
“ ful wretches from whom she was en-  
“ titled to expect every mark of favour,  
“ attention, and respect. She is now  
“ without

“ without resource, and cannot even  
“ reclaim those articles which the  
“ Duke gave her during his life.

“ If any thing can increase the pity  
“ to which Mrs. de Charmes is en-  
“ titled, it is her moderation at this  
“ injustice, and her firmness in adver-  
“ sity. Indeed, my dear Boncœur,  
“ she is an unique model of virtue,  
“ and an object of veneration, &c.”

I felt myself much affected at Mrs. de Charmes's fate, and the tender interest my father took in it. I immediately wrote an answer expressing my concern, and a few days after, I received another letter; in which my father, with his usual abundance of affection, thanked me in the warmest terms for the concern I manifested at Mrs. de Charmes's fate, and which was considerably heightened on reading these pages:

“ With the softness of an angel, she  
“ has a most majestick mien; and with  
“ the graces of a nymph she possesses  
“ an heroic fortitude. I have no  
“ means of expiating the injustice to  
“ which I was contributory, but by en-  
“ deavouring to repair, as far as my  
“ fortune and the interest of my family  
“ will

“ will admit, the injuries this charming woman has sustained. The first duty of humanity is certainly to relieve the unfortunate ; but of the opportunities which Heaven offers us of fulfilling the obligations of charity, the preference should invariably be given to suffering virtue.

“ Mrs. de Charmes will have no other home but our’s, until the aspect of her affairs changes. I doubt not but I shall be able to procure her a pension suitable to her rank and misfortunes. Your wife and Mrs. de Rozieres, who have conceived the most lively affection for her, have adopted my wishes with joy. They are now preparing the small house for her at the bottom of the garden, where she will be quiet and undisturbed, which will render her situation more agreeable, as she is much attached to solitude. My wife approves of this arrangement, but does not evince so much pleasure as I could wish ; I consider her coldness as the effect of her austerity, which is certainly excessive, and thus preventing her from distinguishing oppressed innocence



“ cence from criminality; she looks  
“ on her as covered with opprobrium,  
“ whom the law has condemned from  
“ its extreme vigour. If I entertained  
“ this opinion of Mrs. de Charmes, I  
“ should not be less severe than Mrs.  
“ de Boncœur. Crime shall never  
“ find an asylum in my house, it is  
“ open to the unfortunate only: but I  
“ think I have had experience sufficient  
“ to enable me to distinguish modest  
“ indigence from frontless vice; in  
“ the long exercise of my legal func-  
“ tion I have been accustomed to de-  
“ velope the human heart: and in that of  
“ this dear unfortunate woman, I have  
“ only found what her actions evince,  
“ nobleness and candour; I am certain,  
“ my dear son, you will coincide in my  
“ opinion of the merit of this respecta-  
“ ble and unfortunate woman, and I  
“ know the native goodness of your  
“ heart too well not to be persuaded, but  
“ you will approve of a generous resolu-  
“ tion, which you would have under-  
“ taken yourself, and most probably  
“ executed with more profusion. You,  
“ doubtless, will not refuse your affec-  
“ tion

“ tion to this amiable woman, as you  
“ already possess her’s. From the de-  
“ scription which every one has given  
“ her of your virtues, she incessantly  
“ wishes your return, and frequently  
“ repeats with tears those affectionate  
“ scenes which passed previous to our  
“ marriages. Adieu.”

These two letters could not fail of predisposing me in favour of Mrs. de Charmes. My mother-in-law, my wife, and sister, (who had not returned to her convent) already gave her the title of friend; they spoke of her in equal terms with my father, and considered her as a pleasing augmentation to our family.

I could never think that a woman who had been received with so much confidence and benevolence, would ever have excited trouble and contention in our family. Ungrateful, artful woman! like a serpent re-animated in our bosom, you there diffused your poison and corrupted the purest hearts! You changed our tranquil joys into frightful convulsions, which even time has not been able thoroughly to subdue, and of which

which those who did not sink under the cruel agitation, still retain the deepest impression.

Perhaps this melancholy apostrophe, which I could not repress, may prevent the effect which the recital of the calamities of an unfortunate family might produce on hearts of sensibility; and mine required relief, to enable it to recall those events which it has suffered under the dispensation of Divine Providence.

\* \* \* \* \*

The period of my attendance at Versailles being over, I was eager to return to those most dear to me on earth; and wishing to surprise them, I did not inform them when I should set out.

Every countenance beamed joy at my arrival, and all arms were extended to receive me. Among so many beloved persons, which could be the first object of my affectionate embrace? My father, you should have received my first homage, but my wife's claims superseded this just tribute to you, and her vermillion lips pressed to mine, prevented my expressing the emotions of my soul but by my eyes. What love and joy



sparkled in her's. Lovely wife ! what ungrateful heart could refuse your lively caresses. I pressed her to my bosom with a transport I never before or have since felt, and which she only could have excited. My father, who could not, nor did he wish to disunite us, enclosed us within his arms, and endeavouring to place his face between ours, kissed us with the utmost ardency.

During this scene, my sister and Mrs. de Rozieres also seized my hands, and pressed them alternately to their lips, my father's wife only remained at a distance, her countenance expressing her pleasure at seeing me, and her vexation at not being able to assure me of it, in a similar way to the rest of the family. At length, however, I approached, and encircled her with my arms, and she returned my embrace in a way that seemed to signify more than satisfaction at my return. I sought an explanation in her looks. I observed her downcast eyes suffused with tears, and without uttering a syllable, she with one hand took mine, and placed the other on her heart; I judged the secret it enclosed required a better opportunity for disclosure.

sure, and did not then press for communication, conceiving it better at that moment to affect really more pleasure than I actually felt; in order to dissipate her melancholy, which, in fact, rather damped the joy I experienced at seeing my dear relatives.

As soon as Mrs. de Charmes was informed of my arrival, she prevented the visit I intended, by my father's desire to have paid her, by a note equally elegant and affectionate; I endeavoured to answer it in a similar style, but my ideas were tinged with the melancholy my father's wife had diffused o'er my mind.

Soon after the receipt of my answer, Mrs. de Charmes came to us; her assurances of gratitude were unbounded, she felicitated herself on having the power of demonstrating her esteem for my father by her attachment to me, and affection for the female part of our family, whom she embraced with ardour, and they returned her caresses in a way that tended to dissipate some unpleasant suspicions.

During the whole evening, and while we were at supper, Mrs. de Charmes's

attention and professions of friendship to me, were profuse, and with which my father seemed extremely pleased, particularly as I seemed sensible of her kindness. She declared she could not make any difference between her benefactor and his son. The conversation was interesting and lively, declarations of friendship and esteem were reciprocal, and gaiety and good humour seemed to reign in every heart.

The pretext of my being fatigued by my journey induced every one of the party, except my wife, to entreat me to retire to bed early, whose silence evinced she was fearful they might imagine her joining in the request might arise from some other motive than my repose. This was noticed by Mrs. de Charmes so delicately, as not even to make the object of her observation blush; this gave me a favourable idea of her sense and education, and which my Henrietta praised profusely when we were alone.

The first view of Mrs. de Charmes convinced me, my father had not exaggerated his description of her beauty. She was about four and thirty years of age, but did not appear to be above  
five



five and twenty ; she was tall and well proportioned, and though rather *embon-point*, it was not observable but in those places where it heightened her charms ; her lovely complexion was animated with an imperceptible gradation of colour, that gave the idea of a vermillion stream circulating under a skin of dazzling fairness and exquisite texture. The most delicate delineation of the lily and the rose would have appeared but like an unfinished painting to the fine transparent tissue her bosom presented ; her lips scarcely moved, but every person's attention was attracted to listen to what would issue from her lovely mouth, and her harmonious voice soon excited the interest her amiable manners indicated ; but when she turned her head and fixed her expressive eyes on the person she might be speaking to, it was impossible to look at her without embarrassment and confusion, which an angelick smile thrilled through all the senses. She was like one of those

“ Fairie damsels met in forest's wide,

“ By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,

“ Lancelot, or Peleas, or Pellenore.”

It is possible, that a woman more perfectly elegant might be seen, but never one so interesting and attractive; even those whose interest it was not to praise her beauty, have confessed some secret charm encircled this astonishing woman, which it was impossible to resist.

When I was alone with my Henrietta, the pleasure she experienced at my return was almost forgotten in the profusion of praise she bestowed on her new companion; and Mrs. de Rozieres, who came to us early the following morning, was equally enthusiastick in her commendation. I however checked this stream of praise by inquiring whether they had not observed a considerable degree of melancholy about Mrs. de Boncœur, whom I always so styled, and my wife Henrietta, in order better to distinguish one from the other.

They replied they had often noticed it, and had mentioned it to her, but could not divine the reason; nor was she disposed to communicate it. My father, who had frequently asked her the cause, had invariably received the most chilling replies to his tender inquiries,

quiries, and the only person who seemed to dissipate it for some little time was Mrs. de Charmes. Mrs. de Rozieres and Henrietta both condemned Mrs. de Boncœur's reservedness, inasmuch as it diffused sorrow through a happy family, and by her caprices dispelled joy and tranquillity, and afflicted a fond exemplary husband.

My attachment to my father compelled me to agree with Mrs. de Rozieres and Henrietta; and Mrs. de Boncœur's behaviour to me confirmed me in the opinion of my father's being ill treated.

I was preparing to go to my father, who was in the library, when Mrs. de Charmes came to my chamber, begging us to excuse her intrusion, adding, that my wife having favoured her with an hour's conversation every morning, she hoped my return would not deprive her of that pleasure.

This demand being made with an ardency that denoted sincere friendship, and accompanied with the most seducing smile, I freely promised this charming woman what she requested. My father came in just at this moment,



and assured me that no one merited my friendship and respect more than Mrs. de Charmes, whose introduction into our family he considered as an heavenly favour, for which he should ever be grateful.

The affection she evinced for me, considerably increased the regard he entertained for her. Tears glistened in his eyes at the success of his benevolence, and the pleasures he prospected would spring from a society connected by the most respectable and delicious sentiments.

Farewell.

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LETTER VIII.

The same to the same.

MY sister Hortensia soon joined us in my room; since she had left the convent to assist at our marriages, we had endeavoured to subdue the fervour she manifested for seclusion. The austerity and religious penances she had rigidly observed had contributed to increase the unfavourable aspect nature had afflicted her with. She now, however,

ever, seemed to be improving; her eyes, which were extremely red from the cruel disease that had greatly injured her appearance, were perfectly recovered, and they sparkled with their natural vivacity; the *embonpoint* which greater conveniences, and more abundant living, than she had been accustomed to produced, had filled up the wrinkles in her cheeks; a fine height, most beautiful hands and arms, with an agreeable manner, joined to an excellent disposition, induced us to express our hopes that she would meet with an amiable husband.

Her principles of devotion had influenced her in the neglect of several necessary attainments in society; but Mrs. de Charmes, whose cultivated genius and talents were still greater than her beauty, undertook to repair my sister's deficient education, who felt the most lively friendship for her.

I inquired of my father for Mrs. de Boncœur, and whether I could see her, he immediately conducted me to her, and in the way, he communicated to me the uneasiness his wife's inequality of temper occasioned him; his natural

good disposition would not suffer him to call them caprices, though notwithstanding the most scrupulous examination of his conduct, he could not recollect any cause for her incomprehensible change. Sometimes she refused his caresses, and at others lavished her's on him; sometimes tender, and sometimes serious, she appeared to be agitated by the most lively fondness, or absorbed in the most profound melancholy.

We arrived at her chamber, and in less than one hour she displayed all the inequalities I have noticed; she received me with the most expressive coldness, but this I afterwards learned, arose from her uneasiness to know whether my father had told me of her alteration. The moment we were alone, I did not hesitate to inform her that my father had communicated to me his affectionate concern at her change, that all the family were equally affected, and I had noticed it before any one mentioned it to me.

From the easy manner in which Mrs. de Boncœur defended herself, I was convinced her answer was meditated.

“ You

"You know," she said, "I am naturally serious, and my application to study has increased this defect, which I know is inimical to the amusements of society, but I cannot overcome it, notwithstanding every effort to that purpose: the very effort to be gay, serves but to increase my reserve, and the joy which has been diffused throughout the house for some time, seems to me a specious delirium, that augments my gravity."

I used the most affectionate solicitations for her to declare to me as her best friend, whether there was not some cause for her melancholy which she wished to conceal from me. I know, I added, that you are naturally serious, but your heart, which is equally good, would not admit of your considering, that, a cause of affliction, which gives others satisfaction, and which you would increase by taking part. When any one like you possesses a solid and just mind, it is praise-worthy to study, as it contributes to extend and embellish it; but too much or deep application will only destroy these abundant graces you possess, and deprive you of those

qualifications which have ever rendered you an ornament to society.

A polite, though vague reply, convinced me I was not then to expect that confidence, which her preceding behaviour had indicated; and not conceiving it right to press the subject, I affected to respect a secret which I knew would sooner or later become too oppressive for her sensibility, and she would then, I expected, hasten to deposit it in my bosom; but I was mistaken; more haughty and dissimulative, than tender, she preferred sinking under the weight of affliction, than to relieve herself by a sigh; and her disposition to communicate, as I at first imagined, was rather an involuntary disclosure of her grief, than any inclination to confide in me.

I could not, with the rest, attribute Mrs. de Boncœur's conduct to those caprices, generally said to be characteristic of her sex, and of which our's is not less susceptible. During my long intimacy with her, I observed she possessed too much solidity to be guilty of such inconsequence; I was certain some strong passion had gained ascendancy in her bosom, and whether the
object

object was real or chimerical, she was certainly deeply affected; and it was difficult to cure a wound which every day would become more profound, while the cause was concealed.

It was, therefore, from observation only I could expect to discover what I wished to know; under this idea I was resolved to be particularly watchful; by which, I hoped to obtain some clue that might enable me to restore that peace, which seemed to be flying from our family: the opportunity soon offered.

We were seated at table, and dinner was supported with great gaiety, when the conversation turned upon a serious topick; it was a political point in the Roman government. Mrs. de Boncœur, who piqued herself upon being as well acquainted with their history, as with that of her own life, was extremely eloquent, but unfortunately her memory betrayed her, and she confounded two very different and opposite points. Mrs. de Charmes, who was perfect mistress of their history, without boasting, noticed Mrs. de Boncœur's gross error, as a trifling mistake; she, however, sup-

supported her assertion as right, and begged us to decide. My father's opinion was against her, but still obstinately refusing to yield, she referred to me; I was equally unsuccessful in convincing her she was wrong. Without uttering a syllable, she rose from table, with the strongest indications of contempt in her expressive countenance, which convinced me it was not only her self-love that was offended.

I followed her; but fearful of irritating her by a species of persecution, I stooped at the door of the room into which she had retired, as if to ask her permission to enter. I expected to have found her in tears, the usual relief of her sex, and feeling hearts; but tears were not familiar to this haughty woman; she was seated near a commode, on which she rested her elbow to support her head; her eyes were bent towards the ground, and the continual motion of her legs which were crossed, manifested the agitation of her mind.

As it was impossible she could avoid seeing me, and not having made any sign for me to retire, I advanced a few steps into the room; she did not change
her

her position; perceiving my presence excited no displeasure, I approached farther, and seated myself opposite to her, waiting the moment she might rouse from the profound meditation in which she seemed absorbed. Her mother, her sister and mine, soon afterwards came in, and though each noticed her conduct with more tenderness than severity, neither could obtain an answer.

My sister and wife then each took her hand, and assured her that my father expressed much regret at having displeased her, and that they were extremely sorry to see her so afflicted for such a trivial cause; the only reply they received, was a gentle inclination of the head, which expressed nothing more than a polite return to a compliment.

This indifference made me suppress some excuses I intended to have made, and I was going to retire, when my father came in holding Mrs. de Charmes by the hand. On their appearance, Mrs. de Boncœur arose seemingly with the intention of shunning them, but seeing we had encircled her, and fearing we should oppose her retreat, she immediately resumed her seat, turning her
back

back towards my father and Mrs. de Charmes. He feigned not to see this new insult, and coming up to her, he said, in a mild though firm manner, " Here, Madam, is Mrs. de Charmes, " who never intended to displease you, " who feels particularly hurt if she has " given the least offence, and now solicits your friendship, which I think " she richly merits, and I earnestly intreat you to grant, in the name of " that affection I have always evinced " for you."

This address, though extremely plain, was delivered in a way that demanded a reply, and which I thought Mrs. de Boncœur could not evade; she seemed to meditate, when Mrs. de Charmes, in order to render the result favourable, quitted my father's hand, to take Mrs. de Boncœur's, she pressed it to her lips, without any efforts of Mrs. de Boncœur's to withdraw it, and Mrs. de Charmes, desirous of winning her pardon by excessive submission, bent one knee to solicit it from her imperious enemy.

This action surprising Mrs. de Boncœur, she could not resist discovering her

her astonishment and joy; and fixing her eyes on this humiliated woman, without offering to raise her, she seemed for some time to exult in her triumph; at length she gave her, her other hand, in a way that denoted less friendship, than a proud grant of her pardon.

Mrs. de Charmes then rose, covering her face to hide her confusion, and Mrs. de Boncœur quitting her place with an air of victory, invited her husband to walk in the garden, and to which she instantly bent her steps without waiting a reply.

This scene passed in the most profound silence; my father seemed lost in reflection, tears trickled down my wife and sister's cheeks, I trembled with indignation, and Mrs. de Charmes seemed the least affected at an event that had interested our feelings for her.

“What a character!” I could not resist exclaiming, the moment my father, who followed his haughty wife, left us, “What excess of pride and inhumanity! What an abuse——”

My dear Henrietta threw her arms about my neck, requesting me not to load her sister with reproaches, although
she

she really merited them; feeling for my wife's affliction, I suppressed my rising anger to enjoy her caresses, whose mildness and affection endeared her to me more than ever; I could not forbear remarking to her how superior she was on comparison with her sister; she begged me, however, never to mention the subject, and to forgive her sister, as her conduct only arose from vexation at finding herself excelled; her pride could not sustain it.

My father soon joined us after a fatiguing walk, though he had taken but a few turns; he had left Mrs. de Boncœur with her mother, to whom he relinquished the office of reprimanding her, fearful of doing it himself, lest he should not refrain from being angry, which would only have irritated her more. He proposed that we should go to Mrs. de Charmes, who was in her chamber, and endeavour by our caresses to make her forget, if possible, a disgrace, which we felt equally with herself. The situation of this unfortunate woman, and the moderation she displayed on receiving so gross an insult, required every attention we could shew.

I wil-

I willingly agreed to my father's proposition: it reminded me of his native goodness.

When Mrs. de Charmes saw us enter, she came towards us with a tranquil air, and smiling, seemingly to make us lose the idea of what had passed; this, however, did not diminish the pain we felt for what she had the generosity to conceal. The mildness and resignation of this charming woman expanded all our hearts in her favour, and we were all emulous to demonstrate our attachment to her.

She told us, " I am deeply affected
" by your kindness; how can I shew
" my sincere gratitude, since I have
" the most excuses to make for having
" displeased a person dear to you all,
" and whom I ought to respect for
" many reasons! be assured, if I have
" betrayed any pain or confusion, it has
" only arisen from regret at having
" manifested my gratitude inadequately;
" nor shall I ever consider any exertions too great that can prove how
" much I feel obliged!" Then, turning towards my father, she said, " I
" exult in your commiseration, because
" you

“ you are virtuous, and offered it to me
“ nobly: the pity of a sublime heart,
“ like that of heaven, is no insult, they
“ each inspire an ardent and sincere re-
“ turn. I feel no repugnance at ful-
“ filling all the conditions which are
“ attached to it; regard, care, readi-
“ ness to serve, respect and submission,
“ neither of these can give me a pang,
“ if the performance of them evince to
“ you the sentiments of my heart; and
“ the dependence to which fate has
“ condemned me, can never be confi-
“ dered as servitude, while it attaches
“ me to your excellent and generous
“ family, to which my heart would be
“ dedicated by inclination, were it not
“ compelled by duty.”

My father having requested her to spare our sensibility, and not to further employ the advantages she had over us, again solicited her, by an expressive pressure of the hand, to conclude a discourse that gave him infinite pain; then turning towards me, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and extended his hands with an emotion that at once expressed his admiration and regret: the reply I made denoted but the first sentiment, fearful
of

of afflicting my dear Henrietta, who rewarded me with an affectionate kiss.

The entrance of Mrs. de Boncœur's servant disturbed this interesting scene, by requesting our presence in the saloon, to receive some visitors, and Mrs. de Charmes was particularly requested to make one at a party of Breland, if convenient.

Henrietta, doubting whether Mrs. de Charmes would extend her complaisance so far, immediately took her hand, and begged her not to refuse. This charming woman, after signifying her assent by a most bewitching smile, told the servant she would instantly attend his mistress with infinite pleasure.

My wife shewed the greatest joy at this reconciliation, and I should not have been less pleased, had I thought it would be permanent; but I had developed the true cause of Mrs. de Boncœur's aversion to Mrs. de Charmes, it was a sentiment not easily defaced; besides, I knew Mrs. de Boncœur to be a cross player, not from any motive of avarice, but from a species of humiliation she felt at losing, and I therefore was not so pleased at their playing, as my

my wife, conceiving it would give rise to some disagreeable altercation.

My father, not wishing to play, requested me to take a few turns in the garden with him, to which I agreed, after replying to the felicitations of the company at my return, and on my new situation about his majesty.

For some time my father walked extremely fast without speaking a word, and I followed in silence; on a sudden he stopt, and exclaimed, with a deep sigh, "What a difference!" This expression, which seemed the result of his reflections, was unfortunately too true to be combated. I therefore first praised Mrs. de Charmes's excellent qualities; and then observed I thought Mrs. de Boncœur's faults were excusable; I noticed the elevation of her sentiments, the natural severity of her principles, and though I acknowledged she was too austere, I thought a manifestation of his esteem and attachment to her, would ultimately ameliorate it.

"The elevation of her sentiments!" he retorted, in a way that informed me I was not to hope for much from my mediation—"Elevated sentiments are
" nothing

“ nothing more than the love of virtue
“ carried to a superior degree; an energetic
“ passion, which finding the ordinary
“ limits of the simple duties of
“ society too contracted for its exertions,
“ endeavours to display itself by
“ actions of heroism and generosity.
“ If it sometimes suffers itself to be
“ subdued, it is only to delight in the
“ delicious sentiment of gratitude. Ever
“ susceptible of noble impulsions, every
“ thing partaking of that quality affects
“ equally, in whatever form it may
“ appear, all that is sublime excites its
“ admiration; it is only groveling
“ minds that are wounded by the
“ great actions of others, as we can
“ only be envious of those things which
“ we have not the power of attaining;
“ a jealous pride may produce a noble
“ emulation, but envy is a mean passion,
“ that generates sentiments vile as
“ itself. You have seen the unfortunate
“ and unhappy insulted, confidence
“ basely abused, the rights of
“ hospitality betrayed, and the duties
“ of humanity violated. But it is now
“ over,” he continued, with considerable
“ warmth, “ your sister-in-law
“ has

“ has inspired me with similar sentiments towards her, as those she displayed, when an unfortunate woman humbled herself to her; she having banished pity from her bosom, she must not expect tenderness from me; for the future she must content herself with those simple attentions which politeness demands; I know my duty to her family, my situation, and myself; my vexations shall be hidden in my heart; may Heaven endow me with sufficient power to support all her haughty disposition seems to threaten.”

My father's affliction sunk deep into my bosom; I felt the justice of his complaints, and fearing to displease and irritate him more against her, I forbore attempting an exculpation; at this moment I perceived Mrs. de Charmes coming quickly towards us; her precipitate walk made me dread some new event, I therefore ran to meet her; but on coming near, her fine eyes displayed so much satisfaction, that my apprehensions of something disagreeable vanished; on joining her, I asked what induced her to quit the party so soon, but without

without replying she took my arm, and hastened towards my father, who was coming up to us.

He also felt uneasy at her quick return, but endeavouring to conceal it by an indifferent question, he asked her, if she had been fortunate at play? "See here," she said, pulling out a purse, containing at least fifty louis d'ors: my father, who never suffered playing at his house but for amusement, felicitated Mrs. de Charmes on her success, but not without expressing his disapprobation of so large a sum being lost in so short a time. "I know your delicacy," she said, "and should not have communicated this circumstance to you, nor have won this sum which seems to anger you, had I not been certain it would afford you satisfaction when you knew the particulars.

The Countess de Freville, whom you know is attached to deep play, wished, as you was absent, to play for treble the sum first proposed, and Mrs. de Boncœur, unwilling to refuse, consented, on condition it should be kept a profound secret, and if you returned before the game

“ was over, we should pay each other
“ at the rate originally agreed. On my
“ suggesting it was too high for me to
“ play, Mrs. de Boncœur said she
“ would go halves with me, but a de-
“ gree of false pride prevented me from
“ accepting her proposition, and we
“ each played for our own account.

“ Fortune, at first, favoured Mrs. de
“ Boncœur, who won several consider-
“ able *vatout* of the Countess de Fre-
“ ville, and the two gentlemen who
“ were of the party; they felt hurt,
“ increased their stakes, but without
“ success, while I from the beginning
“ remained tolerably equal, owing to
“ my prudence; nevertheless fortune
“ suddenly changed in my favour, and
“ I won from Mrs. de Boncœur all
“ she had gained from the others; but
“ the mode in which this change took
“ place, convinced me I was more in-
“ debted for this favour to her genero-
“ sity than her ill luck.”

My father listened to Mrs. de
Charmes with attention, seemed to
be much pleased with his wife's genero-
sity, and I endeavoured to establish it as
a proof of their sincere reconciliation.

The

The company coming into the garden interrupted this conversation, and destroyed the hopes I had formed of improving the pleasing impression my father had received; I attempted, however, to keep it up through the day, by remarking to my father, the amiable and familiar manner in which Mrs. de Boncœur treated his beloved *protégée*, during their walk and at supper, where she was particularly attentive.

I remarked with pleasure, that my father, without discovering any particularity, watched every motion of his wife, and seemed to treasure up every word she uttered; I was anxious to know the result of his observations, but she never quitted him until we all retired for the night, and thus prevented me from remonstrating with him, for though she deserved his favour, yet I could not do it in her presence.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

The same to the same.

THE next morning, the moment I learnt my father was in his library, I hastened to him, and was disappointed to find he did not appear so pleased as I expected. "Am you not, my dear Sir," I said, "enchanted with Mrs. de Boncœur's generosity, and the friendship she has manifested for poor Mrs. de Charmes? I flatter myself that this little misunderstanding will serve to increase their attachment to each other, and the slight check it received will tend to strengthen the bands that should unite two women, one of whom is so generous, and the other so grateful."

"My good friend," replied my father, heaving a deep sigh, "the goodness of your disposition, and your love of peace, make you consider what passed yesterday favourably; I wish they were friendly, as ardently as you do, but what you think a proof of it, I consider as strong evidence to the contrary; Mrs. de Boncœur's

“ cœur’s conduct evinces more pride
“ than generosity; satisfied at having
“ humbled an unfortunate woman, she
“ thinks it a full compensation to treat
“ her civilly, and give her a present
“ that displays more ostentation than
“ benevolence. What idea can we
“ form of the heart, that conceives
“ contempt and insult, may be effaced
“ with money? It is having a strange
“ idea of honour, to suppose it can be
“ satisfied by such a despicable reparation.
“ If by one of those involuntary
“ movements, that human frailty
“ cannot oppose, you should be so
“ mean as to insult the unfortunate, it
“ is only by sincere submission, that
“ you could regain the advantage you
“ have given him over you; happy, if
“ by your acknowledgment of having
“ done wrong, and by actions of kindness
“ you should be able to conciliate
“ a justly irritated heart, and win his
“ friendship; by these means only you
“ could again become his equal, if he
“ is generous enough to forgive you;
“ from such a contest of gratitude and
“ generosity, a lively and durable sentiment
“ may spring, which would be

“ the pledge of a solid and intimate
“ union, as it would be founded on
“ virtue!

“ In all Mrs. de Boncœur’s pro-
“ ceedings, even in her attentions to
“ Mrs. de Charmes, can one avoid
“ seeing that affectation of superiority
“ and insulting familiarity, so degra-
“ ding to those who are its objects?
“ How easy it is distinguished from
“ that soft affability, whose sweetness
“ is so bewitching and interesting?”

“ You, nevertheless, must observe,”

I replied, “ the effect the attentions of
“ your generous wife have on Mrs. de
“ Charmes’s grateful heart.”—“ Ah!

“ it is the latter,” he exclaimed with
transport, “ it is her who should be

“ called generous. Mrs. de Boncœur’s

“ designs have not escaped her, and

“ humiliating as they are, she only

“ considers them as motives for grati-

“ tude, and the means of a reconcilia-

“ tion, which she seizes with an ar-

“ dour that raises her higher in my

“ opinion, and must in your’s, unless

“ you divest yourself of justice.”

I assured my father, I was fully sen-
sible of Mrs. de Charmes’s amiable
qualities—Here he interrupted me,

“ I can-

"I cannot see her to-day," he said;
"I shall even avoid paying her those
"civilities common politeness demands,
"in order to save the feelings of those
"about me; but assure her, from me,
"I feel for her, and ever shall, all those
"sincere and permanent sentiments
"which respect and admiration in-
"spire."

I could not disapprove of the respectable motives on which my father's attachment to this incomparable woman was founded, but I foresaw the most melancholy effects to the tranquillity of our family would result from it; agreeable to his wish, however, I left him to wait on her, and to my inexpressible astonishment learnt, that she had gone out unattended, almost as early as it was light.

What could be the motive of this mysterious departure? Among the numberless ideas that presented themselves to my mind, that which would have been the most painful to my father recurred the oftenest, and yet I ardently wished it realized, as it would be the only means of immediately re-establishing that domestic tranquillity,

G 4

which

which I could not otherways expect by any species of exertion; but I was far from imagining the true cause of her absence, for in the state of mind I was, I supposed it a premeditated flight, arising from excessive prudence, and executed by an uncommon effort of generosity.

Under this idea I retired to my room, in order to devise some means of communicating this intelligence to my father, without wounding his sensibility; and though I had revolved in what manner I should proceed, I had not yet discovered a favourable mode, when my father entered in the most extreme agitation, and as I supposed, from having been informed of Mrs. de Charmes's flight; his first words confirmed me in this opinion.

"Oh! my son," he exclaimed, "all that heaven has formed most perfect, all the earth contains most virtuous, our house has been an asylum to: listen, my son, to a generous action of Mrs. de Charmes."

At this expression I felt my bosom relieved from the weight with which it was oppressed, as from the terms my father

father used, I saw he approved of an event which I supposed would have caused him the deepest affliction, and I reproached myself for having been guilty of such an error of thought.

“Learn,” continued my father,
“the use which this divine woman
“has made of the money she yesterday
“won at play; having learnt the name
“of that honest and poor artificer,
“Michel; that he had been long
“confined, having lost the use of his
“limbs, she went to his lodging, and
“told him, that I having obtained un-
“expectedly a large sum of money,
“intended to employ it in augmenting
“the comforts of those who were
“virtuous and unfortunate; con-
“ceiving him to be of this description,
“she gave him the fifty louis she had
“won, to procure such necessaries as
“he might require; and that I might
“not be prevented from giving the
“usual sum I allowed them monthly,
“she told them it would be useless to
“thank me personally, as I had charged
“her with the distribution of certain
“sums, without specifying to whom.

“ Poor Michel’s wife, notwithstanding this caution, could not suppress her gratitude, and on her knees she has been blessing me for my benevolence. I could not imagine what had caused this profusion of thanks, as the ardency with which they were expressed could not arise from the little services they regularly received from me; I therefore desired her to moderate her effusions, and tell me candidly whether she was in want of additional aid?”

“ Ah! no,” she replied, “ God forbid I should abuse such magnanimous benevolence as you have exerted towards me. No, Sir, on the contrary, this sum is too great for our actual wants; my husband, by your generous care, hopes soon to be able to return to his work; but if you insist on loading us with your kindness, we will take half the sum as a marriage portion for our daughter, who with this aid will be happy with an industrious young man who has long been attached to her.”

“ This speech, frequently interrupted in the delivery, by thanks, exclamations,

“ tions, and prayers for my happiness,
“ rendered her conduct still more mys-
“ terious, and I solemnly protested I
“ had not the least knowledge of the
“ donation she mentioned.”—“ Ah!
“ my good Sir,” she exclaimed, “ do
“ not deny such a noble action, it is
“ one more to add to those you daily
“ perform, and the lady who gave us
“ this purse, was right in thinking it
“ would render the donation more pre-
“ cious, by telling us who it came
“ from, as we are accustomed to re-
“ ceive from you our daily subsistence.
“ There she is!” she exclaimed,
pointing to Mrs. de Charmes, who
was coming across the court.

“ I now discovered the whole; and
“ immediately sent a servant intreating
“ Mrs. de Charmes’s company. The
“ emotion she betrayed on entering at
“ seeing the object of her benevolence,
“ dispelled every doubt as to the au-
“ thor of this generous act, and re-
“ gardless of the woman’s presence, I
“ pressed her ardently to my bosom,
“ while she poured out her gratitude at
“ our feet. I fear I was too familiar,

“ but it was impossible to suppress my
“ feelings.”

This communication of my father's affected me much, and prevented me from representing to him, that I thought it would be right to act with more precaution when we all assembled at table. At dinner, however, he was loud in her praise, and spoke with that energy which a noble action inspires, especially when we have a friendship, and are interested for the object who performed it: he drew tears from almost every one present, but particularly the servants; and this was the principal effect he wished, as he was solicitously desirous that his amiable *protégée* should be respected equally with himself.

From the warmth with which he expressed himself, I was fearful something offensive to Mrs. de Boncœur might escape him, but I was happily mistaken, and Mrs. Boncœur was not deficient in those praises which she ever bestowed on those whom she thought merited them.

The moment we quitted table, I hastened to make the remark to my father.

ther, who, taking me by the hand, replied in a low voice, "what a difference! my son. Ah! if heaven had permitted"---he checked himself, and sighing heavily, he pressed my hand to his heart with such ardency, as left me no doubt of the state it was reduced to; "but," he added, "I will at least accomplish for this incomparable woman, what heaven promises to benevolent souls. She shall have her gift returned cent-fold, and her noble heart, shall still further aggrandize human nature by the new power with which she shall be invested."

At this period of enthusiasm, it was not proper to oppose a resolution which reflection would moderate, and at whatever time I might attempt it, my father knew my heart too well, to suspect that any mean interest would influence my suggestions.

Notwithstanding my father was thus disposed, I was certain Mrs. de Boncœur might easily regain his affection, he being naturally inclined to fulfil his duties, when there was no obstacle to repel him; if it was true another was
near

near superseding her in his affections, she might, like the rest of her sex, remonstrate with expectation of certain victory, if she would only employ mildness, complaisance, and generosity; with the slightest knowledge of my father's disposition it might be predicted he would determine in favour of the most noble and most virtuous.

The contrary was, however, her conduct; while Mrs. de Charmes who had attracted my father at first sight, was insensibly winding herself into his heart, by her sweetness and urbanity, Mrs. de Boncœur repelled him by her austerity and rudeness.

But without troubling you with the domestick bickerings which lasted for several months, I will in my next inform you of an event which, though it in no way related to our family concerns, was however definite, from the sudden resolution which it made my father adopt.

Farewell.

LET-

LETTER X.

The same to the same.

A GENTLEMAN who lived retired in the country, received a remittance of a thousand louis d'ors; these he divided into ten parcels, and wrapped each in a leaf of an old musick book, this was done in the presence of his servant. For some particular reasons he wished to conceal having received this money, he therefore requested one of his friends to come to his house, and to him he gave it, with the strictest injunctions to deny having it in his possession, and in case he should die, desired him to deliver it to a natural son for whom he destined it as a legacy.

His friend, Mr. C——, after promising to execute the trust faithfully, gave an acknowledgment for the receipt of the money, then supping with him retired home, little thinking what would be the dire effects of this deposit.

So large a sum of money had tempted the servant; and the villain resolved to assassinate his master the succeeding night. During the first hours of sleep he

he performed his horrible project; but only finding Mr. C—'s acknowledgment in his master's secretary instead of the money that had excited his guilty desires, rage and despair possessed his bosom, and he determined Mr. C— should suffer the punishment he deserved, and which he could not avoid, without this abominable accusation. He retired to his chamber, and passed the night in devising the means to avoid suspicion, by fixing them on the object he had selected for his vengeance. The first result of his reflections was to burn the acknowledgment he had found, and then alarm the family with his cries at the shocking accident that had occurred.

The magistrates being called, the servants were examined, and unanimously deposed Mr. C— was the only person who had been to see their master, and having remained shut up with him till very late, it was impossible any other person but him could have been guilty of the murder. The magistrates immediately went to the unfortunate Mr. C—'s house; he had gone that morning to Paris, where his affairs called him;

him; this journey was considered as flying to evade justice. The house was searched, and the ten packets of louis, as described by the servant, were among the first things found.

Mr. C— having been required to be secret, had not written on the outside of the covers, whose property the contents were; this apparently established his guilt. From the same principle of secrecy, when he was brought before the judges, he at first denied having any knowledge of the money, having been arrested without the murder being communicated to him; but when he was informed of the magnitude of his accusation, he could not avoid confessing, that his friend had entrusted him with such a sum of money, and as a proof that it had been deposited with him, he pointed out a drawer in his friend's secretary, where his acknowledgment would be found. An ineffectual search was instantly made; this important paper and the only evidence that could clear Mr. C— was vanished; his first answers were different to his last, his flight, the leaves which enveloped the louis, corresponded exactly to the mu-
sick

sick book from whence they were taken, and the unanimous depositions of the servants, were all strong evidences against this unfortunate gentleman, who saw the terrible and ignominious punishment of a murderer impending o'er his head. He was ordered to be tortured, the excruciating pains of which might, perhaps, have made him confess a crime he never perpetrated, when heaven, the protector of innocence, interfered to save him.

Criminal offences, in which there are no accomplices, are speedily determined at ———. The unhappy Mr. C— would have been tried and executed in two days, if the murdered body had not been kept unburied during the examinations; wounded in nine places with a knife, and in parts generally denominated mortal, it was not thought but he was positively dead; but (O divine Providence!) when they came to shroud him, a long drawn sigh gave some hopes of remaining life; those who were performing this last office to him, frightened, ran away, and soon spread this wonderful news throughout the village; some, less timid,

timid, immediately examined the body, and found there was still life, though nearly extinguished beyond the power of resuscitation, owing to the profuse loss of blood.

Every one was so certain of Mr. C—— being the murderer, that it was never thought of asking him who had committed the attempt; and the rascal who had committed this atrocious deed, impelled by his fellow servants to go and see his master, went with them to his chamber, trusting to his insensibility and weakness for not being discovered.

From the same ardency of zeal that had brought them all into their master's room, they all hastened from it, to get him some assistance. The murderous villain alone remained behind, resolved to seize that opportunity to finish a deed, the consummation of which was now more than ever necessary to his safety; he had already got on the dying man's bed, was placing his knee at the pit of his stomach, and his hands to his throat, with intent to strangle him; but Heaven, ever watchful to succour innocence and punish crime, two servants came

came in with a surgeon; the assassin's action was not equivocal, they seized him, bound him strongly, and dragged him before the tribunal, just as the most horrid and unjust sentence was going to be pronounced. Well may we say, with the immortal British bard,

“ Foul deeds will rise,
“ Though all the earth o’erwhelm them :
“ And ~~murder~~, though it have no tongue, will
“ speak
“ With most miraculous organ.”

The judges, frightened at the iniquity they were near committing, remained for some time motionless on their seats, in the greatest consternation. Suddenly they flung themselves on their knees, and thanked Heaven for rescuing them from the hideous error they had nearly perpetrated; my father's susceptible heart was deeply impressed by this terrible event, it reminded him of the injustice Mrs. de Charmes had experienced, and from that moment he resolved to renounce a situation, in which he saw himself exposed to oppress innocence by necessity or mistake.

“ I was

I was performing the duties of my office about the King, when I received the letter containing my father's resolution, and the melancholy every line expressed convinced me of the state of his heart. I was much afflicted at his determination, though he had often before mentioned his design to me; but I had considered it as the effect of transient chagrin, which would soon be obliterated, when the love of his country reminded him of his duty. I even presumed to remonstrate with him upon this principle, knowing the influence it had over him. My representations, however, arrived too late, he had given in his resignation, and of which I was informed by the King.

Just after his Majesty had communicated this circumstance to me, I received a letter from Mrs. de Boncœur, in which she expressed her concern at the injury my father's reputation might sustain, her regret at seeing him voluntarily renounce the means of acquiring glory, and the honour he had already obtained in a situation he had filled with such distinction.

“ If

“ If he is regardless of the honours
“ that are within his reach, (she wrote)
“ why deprive his children of them ?”
“ Fathers are equally accountable to
“ their families, for the distinguishing
“ titles they may acquire, as for the
“ wealth they may amass; how shame-
“ ful to forget himself and them!—
“ What can have enfeebled a mind
“ so uniformly noble, generous, and
“ active for the publick good? What
“ powerful charm has beguiled him
“ from such dear and sacred duties?
“ Oh! my son! my brother! my
“ friend! recall this father to a sense
“ of his obligations, your affectionate
“ remonstrances will restore him, with-
“ out doubt, to his family, whom he
“ has driven to despair, and to him-
“ self, whom he has betrayed, by
“ abandoning his country.”

Throughout this letter, there was a degree of warmth that clearly demonstrated how deeply she was interested for her husband, to whose glory she was more attached than to his person; but if this sentiment, which partook more of ambition than tenderness, was the only

only bond that attached her to him, it was near receiving a shock that might break it.

The King, whose bounty to me had always exceeded my services, observed the vexation my father's resolution gave me. "It shall not impede your fortune," he told me one day when we were alone; "he, only shall experience its effects; go this evening to Mr. de Louvois, and tell him to expedite what I ordered for you yesterday." I wished to express my gratitude, but he prevented me by saying, "Depart; your sorrow affects me too much; you may come to me again when you have received what I hope will console you."

Deeply impressed by so much kindness, I gave way to the most agreeable hopes, and though they were uncertain, and consequently less flattering, still was I delighted, conceiving they would afford my father pleasure.

I waited on the minister; he seemed highly displeased at my father's resignation, and after having severely reprobated his conduct, gave me a sealed packet addressed to him.

If

If the King's kindness cheered me, the minister's reproaches frightened me, inasmuch as I conceived the packet contained some rigorous order against my father. I could not sleep throughout the night, and when I waited on the King in the morning, he seemed astonished to see me, and asked why I was not yet gone to deliver the papers the minister had given me, for my father. Mr. de Louvois had forgot to mention this to me, and conceiving the question to be an order, I instantly sent for post-horses to take me to -----.

During the journey I could not subdue the uneasiness that oppressed me, for though the King had assured me of his august protection, he did not conceal his anger at my father's resignation. The minister's language openly declared his displeasure, and if this packet contained nothing but reprimand, I was sensible, if my father had not lost the sensibility I knew he once possessed, he would suffer most severely.

On the other hand, I knew the King's benevolence and humanity too well, to suppose he would send a son with a rigorous decree against his father. Many others,

others, less delicate than myself, would have freed themselves from such perplexing doubts, by opening the packet; but the publick seal appeared to me too sacred to be broken, consistently with the respect I owed his majesty.

My unexpected return afforded some consolation to my family, whom I found extremely depressed and melancholy; I therefore would not alarm them by communicating my fears, which perhaps were groundless, conceiving it would be full time to manifest my sorrow, should they be realized.

After receiving my father's felicitations, I begged him to favour me with a few minutes private conversation, to explain to him the motive for my early return; as the family did not conceive it was any thing unusual, we retired immediately.

The moment we were alone, I, with a trembling hand, gave him the packet which contained his fate, and consequently mine; perceiving my agitation, he checked himself in opening it, when he saw it came from the minister. "Whatever it may contain," he said, "be you composed, my son; whether

“ it is favourable or disgraceful, I
“ shall receive it the same. I have for
“ some time been insensible to the dis-
“ pensations of fortune, and all the
“ future happiness I prospect, is from
“ your affection, and the esteem of a
“ person whose friendship, after your’s,
“ is the most dear to me on earth.”

These observations, which were intended to cheer me, would only have augmented my uneasiness, had not a perusal of the minister’s letters dispelled all fears and doubts. My father was but a short time reading them, and, after pressing his royal master’s signature to his lips, he gave them to me, saying, “ They do me more honour than
“ I merit; see the favour which his
“ majesty has bestowed on me.”

On the first view, I found my father was made a count and counsellor of state: this two-fold honour was conferred in the most distinguished and flattering terms.

I embraced my father with an ardency that fully expressed my joy at this happy event, and unwilling longer to seclude my family from participating the satisfaction this glorious and unexpected

pected elevation inspired, I instantly convened them.

Our happiness, however, was not of long duration, for he declared it to be his immutable resolution to retire from tumultuous life, to pass the remainder of his days in peace, and acting according to the impulses of his heart; or, in other words, to employ himself solely in endeavouring to render those happy who might still retain an affection for him.

"I will not," he added, "totally decline the favours with which his majesty has honoured me, I accept them with the most sincere and lively gratitude, considering them as a recompense for my ancestors' services, and what you merit for the zeal and affection which I know you possess for the excellent and respectable monarch you have the honour of attending; but to interfere in the concerns of the state, when I cannot conciliate those of my own family; to know the miseries of the people, without being able to relieve them; to see power abused, without the means of repressing it; to see interest

H 2

"superfede

“superfede merit; favour, virtue;
“honours the reward of baseness; and
“the publick patrimony the price of
“treason; No! Heaven preserve me
“from witnessing such proceedings,
“while I have not the power of re-
“venging them. If the fear of com-
“mitting injustice made me resign the
“magistracy, how can you expect I
“should take a part in the affairs of
“government? Ah! my son,

“In this rank age,
“Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.”

My father perceiving we were inclined to offer some observations in reply, and that they might be founded on arguments equally strong with those he had suggested, said, with some precipitation, “Reasoning is useless, my
“resolves are written here,” placing his hand on his heart; “if any thing
“could change them, it would be my
“son's interest, which would have
“more effect than the most earnest so-
“licitations.” This assertion was the surest method of suspending my remonstrances, and changing them into expressions of gratitude, to which I added my

my unalterable determination of ever submitting to his will.

Mrs. de Boncœur, on the contrary, could scarcely conceal her impatience; her vanity was roused at seeing her husband so insensible of the honours offered to him. At length, unable longer to repress her feelings, and lowering her voice without softening it, "You will permit me," she said to her husband, "to observe there are yet
" some persons who have some claim
" to your elevation, and are interested
" in your glory; if from their situation of affection for you, they have
" influence on your mind, they will
" never suffer---" "I know," interrupted my father, "my duty to those to
" whom I belong, to those that belong
" to me, and what I owe myself; I
" am sensible of the interest friendship
" inspires in my favour; mine is not less
" than it ever was, for my children and
" my friends, and it is solely to indulge
" more freely in the tender affections,
" that I prefer retirement."—"Yes,"
" rejoined Mrs. de Boncœur, "there are
" sentiments that require the thickest
" veils of mystery and solitude to conceal
H 3 " them.

“ them. It would be indiscreet to enter
“ into engagements that might disturb
“ them.” This was said with a degree of malevolence that spoke her full meaning.

“ Doubt not,” I exclaimed, “ what-
“ ever resolutions you, my dear father,
“ may have formed, you will find us
“ ready to adopt, and to contribute every
“ thing in our power to accomplish
“ your wishes; but can those who
“ love you, and are dear to you, be
“ satisfied, if any thing is wanting to
“ constitute their happiness?” He replied, “ I know those who love me;
“ no illusion will seduce my heart; the
“ losses it has sustained, have deeply
“ affected it; acute have been the pains
“ it has felt, by the efforts of those
“ who have attempted to read it; long
“ has it bled, but the wound is now
“ closed, and the remaining cicatrix is
“ so indurated, that nothing can pierce
“ it.”

“ The sentiments it now contains
“ are more injurious to it, than what
“ has passed,” said Mrs. de Boncœur,
with a look of indignation and contempt; and darting out of the room:
she

she flung the door to with a violence that resounded throughout the house.

Freely would I have relinquished ten years of my life to have prevented this scene; I considered it as a declaration of war between man and wife, that would perhaps soon shew itself in endeavours to get rid of a yoke that would become daily more mutually insupportable; discord would diffuse itself through a family long united in harmony; hatred, fury, and revenge would banish love, friendship, and tenderness from their hearts. What misfortunes were ready to overwhelm the persons most dear to me on earth, if I could not devise some means of prevention! But what power could I employ to unite two hearts, that seemed to fly from each other with equal rapidity? What was I to expect from the haughty and passionate temper of my mother-in-law? What could I exact from my father's goodness, who had been so highly insulted? For which of the parties could I expect to interest Mrs. de Rozieres and my wife? They had long condemned Mrs. de Boncœur's conduct; but how could I excuse my father's

H 4

change,

change, although her haughtiness and caprice had caused it? Women always interest themselves for those they see abandoned and disregarded; with what reason, then, could I suppose a mother and a sister would condemn her they considered to be so situated? Depending, however, on their mildness and native goodness of disposition, and their affection for me, I did not despair of effecting a reconciliation speedily.

Farewell.

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LETTER XI.

*The same to the same.*

THE painful sensation every one felt on witnessing the scene described in my last, obliged them to retire, to save themselves from the embarrassment they felt at each other's presence. I immediately joined my wife, supposing I should easily persuade her to coincide with me, should she even have embraced her sister's cause. I found her with her mother, and these two excellent women, without attaching more blame to one than to the other, were meditating on some plan to re-  
establish

establish harmony between two persons who were equally dear to them. Finding them so happily disposed, I embraced them with transport, and we went immediately to Mrs. de Boncœur's apartment, more with the desire, than with the hope of persuading her to adopt pacifick measures.

Conceiving from appearances, that my mediation would have but little influence, I suffered Mrs. de Rozieres to speak, who, without entering into the discussion of injuries, or causes of complaint, painted in the most glowing colours the deep sorrow we felt for the disagreement that had taken place.

Mrs. de Boncœur made no reply but by a deep sigh, which expressed she was equally sorry, and a look that said it was not her fault; her mother remarked, that the surest means of regaining her husband's affection was mildness and resignation, whether a new object had attracted his attention, or his caprice and indifference was the cause.

"If any one," said Mrs. de Rozieres, "forfeits our affection from their own faults, ought they for a  
H 3 "moment

“ moment to neglect the adoption of.  
“ such conduct as may efface the  
“ wrongs they have committed?

“ On the contrary, if the husband  
“ is inconstant, and ready to follow  
“ every new inclination, endeavour to  
“ fix his desires, by captivating his  
“ heart with the most endearing atten-  
“ tions, let him find more readiness in  
“ your desire to please, more softness  
“ in your caresses, more activity in  
“ your care, and more delicacy in  
“ your proceedings: appear to act  
“ thus without any particular effort,  
“ and even with joy, you will then  
“ see him emulate your exertions, and  
“ even wish to share them; then re-  
“ double your activity and kindness,  
“ and be certain he would surpass you  
“ in his endeavours to please. His  
“ affection, augmented by his grati-  
“ tude, you would have a husband  
“ whom love, esteem, respect, confi-  
“ dence, generosity, and all the senti-  
“ ments that form the sacred bands of  
“ a sincere and permanent union, would  
“ attach to you for ever, and you would  
“ then mutually enjoy those delightful  
“ treasures reserved for tender-lovers.

MEMOIR

II

The



“ The happiness of a virtuous woman  
“ can only exist in the possession of her  
“ husband’s heart.”

It was impossible for me to add any thing to this feeling address, which in fact, extorted a tear and some sighs from Mrs. de Boncœur. From whatever source these tears sprang, I considered them as a signal of our victory. I therefore urged such arguments as the honour, harmony, interest, and happiness of our family suggested; I begged her not to oppose the efforts we should employ to effect a reconciliation, and to confide her interests to our zeal.

I might have offered a mode that would have been certain in its effect; I mean the removal of Mrs. de Charmes; but how could I mention it to Mrs. de Boncœur, whose pride revolted at the slightest idea of rivalry between them? It was necessary to be done cautiously, that she might not claim more victory than we were willing to grant her; we could not expect any beneficial effects from such proceedings as might wound this vain woman’s self-love, should they even promise ultimately to obtain the object of her highest wishes.

Nevertheless, from such separation only was unanimity to be expected ; but how could it be obtained, if we did not dare propose it to those desiring it ?

I would not, however, relinquish the idea, and leaving Mrs. de Boncœur to the affectionate endearments of my Henrietta, I communicated it to Mrs. de Rozieres, who agreed with me as to its efficacy, but felt equally embarrassed how to propose it to her who was to reap the advantage, as to her who was to be the victim. We, however, agreed that she should mention it to her daughter, who would feel less before her, at finding herself obliged to have recourse to such a humiliating resource ; and I undertook to mention it to Mrs. de Charmes, with all the delicacy that respectable woman deserved.

My father's assent, which was extremely necessary to this arrangement, I conceived would be easily obtained. I knew his natural inclination for harmony and unanimity, and consequently was far from suspecting him of any projects contrary to the dictates of virtue ; but how could I influence him to renounce the  
society

society of a charming woman, who formed the solace of his heart, and to whom he was attached by the most tender sentiments, and equally respectable motives.

As I approached my father's room, my heart palpitated quicker, my ideas were confused; and the fear with which I was oppressed, augmented at every step; when I came to the door, a sudden and violent tremor seized me, and unable to proceed, or even support myself, I seated myself on the stairs, hoping to recover my strength.

Here as my agitation subsided, a different train of thoughts presented themselves to my mind. What, said I to myself, am I about doing! why should I afflict a parent who has ever studied my happiness, by depriving him of the only consolation he has in my absence, and asking him to proscribe a tender and respectable friend, to gratify a vain, insensible woman, who would only consider this sacrifice as what she was entitled to, and would scorn to acknowledge it as a favour? — But she is his wife, and her rights are incontestable — But when was a son so rash and indiscreet as to judge and condemn his father?

If



If bare suspicion of our neighbour is a crime, how guilty must that son be who directs it against a parent?—What lessons of wisdom am I going to present him, that I have not drawn from his virtuous heart! Ungrateful wretch! before I prescribe to him the bounds of his duty, let me fulfil mine of respect and submission.

At this moment I thought my father had answered my remonstrances by the last expressions; seized with fright, I arose, and fell on my knees, prostrated myself before heaven, and implored the Almighty with the most fervent ardour to restore happiness to my father and my afflicted family. In the confusion of such opposite and painful thoughts, I had wept unconsciously.

I was still in this situation, when my father opened his door, and surprised me in this humble posture. Immediately he hastened to raise me, and taking me in his arms, carried me into his room, and placing me on a seat, begged to know the cause of my affliction.

His affectionate solicitude served but to increase my agitation, and banish  
from

from my mind, if any trace yet remained, the fatal resolution that had caused it; but I could not resist the intreaties of this fond and beloved parent, and conceiving I should never meet a more propitious moment than during this flow of tenderness, which seemed to have banished every other sentiment from his heart, I, after repeated efforts, and with as many sighs as words, said, that almost driven to despair by the discord that divided and had so long afflicted our family, I had implored heaven to inspire me with the power of restoring tranquillity, and the mode which seemed to promise success was to send away—I could not finish the sentence, which I expected would pierce his susceptible heart, but fixed my eyes on his, and was equally surprized and satisfied to see no alteration in his countenance: to hear him say, if the wishes of the whole family are for the exclusion of Mrs. de Charmes, and peace cannot be restored without it, I give my consent to the measure; but they must not require or expect me to make so shameful and afflicting a request to that respectable and amiable woman.

The joy I felt at my father's consent, was not without a degree of sorrow,

arising from my regret at having dared to suspect his wisdom and virtue, and my repentance augmenting my admiration, also increased my respect and affection.

After assuring my father that the utmost delicacy should be employed in disclosing our wishes to Mrs. de Charmes, I flew to Mrs. de Rozieres, whose hopes I found were less flattering than those I imparted to her. She said, "You have, my son, found the true cause of the evil; and though my daughter refuses to explain herself clearly, I find the only means of satisfying her, is the exclusion of Mrs. de Charmes. But how can we expect that the Mr. de Boncœur, whom this woman"—"Do my father more justice," I exclaimed (with a degree of vivacity that the admiration of his conduct inspired me with,) "he consents, and if I cannot say, with joy, I can attest it was without apparent reluctance."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. de Rozieres, in the first emotion of surprise and joy, "is it possible? but how," continued she, bending her eyes to the ground, "and by what means shall



“ shall we be able to make reparation  
“ for those suspicions”—Here I interrupted her by saying, “ Do not, Madam, recall them to my mind, let us  
“ suffer them for our mutual honour to  
“ be buried in the deepest oblivion;  
“ may this respectable father, and virtuous husband be ever ignorant of  
“ them; and may our profound respect  
“ and lively attachment prevent him  
“ from suspecting we were ever guilty  
“ of such injustice! Let us now inform your daughter of these happy  
“ preliminaries of approaching peace,  
“ and I know but little of Mrs. de  
“ Charmes’s generosity, if I do not  
“ interest her in the tranquillity of so  
“ many persons who love her, and who  
“ conceive it the dearest employment of  
“ their lives to contribute to her happiness.”

This uncommon woman had inspired me with the most sincere attachment; and such was my confidence in her generosity, of which she had given more than one example, that I imagined it would only be necessary to mention to her that she must leave us, to insure and restore our domestick happiness, for her to accede immediately to our wishes. Under  
this

this impression I hastened to her apartment.

After listening attentively to my proposition, which was accompanied with every qualifying expression, and protestations of our immortal attachment, Mrs. de Charmes replied, there was no sacrifice, but what she was willing to make, except the gratitude she owed my father; and she should conceive herself guilty of the blackest ingratitude and the highest contempt, if she was to abandon the asylum he had afforded her without his immediate and express order to that effect. I solemnly assured her it was with his consent that I proposed a separation, which, though he felt severely, he yet considered it to be absolutely necessary. She still persisted in hearing his determination from himself. I was equally unsuccessful in my endeavours to rouse her pride, by representing it would appear better for her to retire without any apparent intimation. She assured me that nothing could afflict her more than a probability of giving offence to my father; and she was as fearful of displeasing him, as others tremble at offending heaven.

This

This was the first time Mrs. de Charmes did not impress me by that fascinating manner she invariably displayed; and whether I expected more from her generosity, or whether a more immediate and pressing interest made me judge of her with rigour, I only perceived in her tranquil and steady replies an air of hypocrisy which dispelled the effects of the illusion she had too long swayed my heart with.

On communicating the ill success of my negotiation to Mrs. de Rozieres and my sister, I did not find them better disposed in her favour than myself. By what right, said they, does this stranger pretend to direct your father? Is sowing discord in a family that has laden her with benefits, and she overwhelmed with troubles, a mode of fulfilling the duties of gratitude, or even civility, by persisting to place a barrier to conjugal happiness? And what is the delicacy of forcing herself to be driven away like an unwelcome parasite?

Mrs. de Rozieres was as angry at Mrs. de Charmes's obstinacy as she had been delighted with my father's condescension, which she had exultingly communicated



municated to her daughter, who also testified much pleasure at the unexpected intelligence. In what manner were we now to inform her of the downfall of our hopes, and of the person whom she considered as her enemy impeding her happiness? We were aware how this circumstance would increase the indignation of one who could not bear the least opposition; and we thought it better therefore to try my father again, whose heart was as easily interested as his wife's irritated.

My first attempt, however, had affected me too much for me to undertake a second. Mrs. de Rozieres excused herself on the principle of delicacy, and Henrietta refused interfering from her natural timidity. It was her, however, who proposed the plan we adopted: "Let us," she said, "wait on your father together, he will not be able to resist our combined solicitations and careffes." We approved of the scheme, and put it into immediate execution. They went before, and I followed behind; the agitation I felt on entering my father's room, would certainly have prevented

prevented me from uttering a single syllable, had I been alone.

Neither Mrs. de Rozières nor Henrietta knew how to communicate the object of their visit; they had made various attempts, when a circumstance occurred that obviated every difficulty.

My sister Hortensia, who equally felt the sorrow that was diffused through the family, but whose inexperience prevented her from penetrating the cause, frequently endeavoured to alleviate Mrs. de Boncœur's affliction, but never received any return but the most repulsive coolness, and sometimes insult. Imbibing of her, therefore, and with some reason, the idea which is generally formed of a mother-in-law, she conceived that her living with us was the cause of the uneasiness and trouble she had so long observed, and she came at this period to my father, begging with tears that she might return to the convent, preferring, she said, to end her days there, than occasion the least inconvenience to those for whom she must ever entertain the most sincere love and respect.

After

After assuring her she was mistaken, and that there was no person whose presence we wished for more than her's, we eagerly seized this opportunity of soliciting the exclusion of the person who was the sole cause of our woes.

My sister's tenderness had awakened my sensibility; and I did not doubt but we should gain the point we wished; but to our disappointment he was still firm in his resolution of maintaining what he denominated the sacred duties of hospitality.

The arguments with which he supported this resolution, were so powerful, that we could only urge our wishes in opposition, but these could not support us long against the justice of his generous refusal.

Although Mrs. de Charmes's obstinacy did not arise from equally respectable motives, we could not expect to surmount them more easily, nor was there the smallest hope of conciliating Mrs. de Bonceur; we were therefore reduced to the sad necessity of waiting for time to effect, what we had endeavoured to do by solicitation.

It



It was not possible to conceal long from Mrs. de Boncœur the result of our mediation, and Mrs. de Rozieres having informed her of the principles on which her husband and Mrs. de Charmes supported themselves, she only replied by a sneer, expressive of her opinion, that she supposed their excuses were meditated. She immediately retired to her library, where she remained for some hours, and we learnt she had employed this time in writing a letter, which she conveyed to my father.

Observing this letter not to produce any remarkable effect, we never inquired the subject, and several days passed in a mournful silence, which fully displayed the profound sorrow every heart experienced.

We met but at meal times, and then with downcast eyes, and without uttering a syllable; the greater part of the food was returned untouched, and constraint soon separated those whom convenience only kept together without being united.

If by chance they met each other in the course of the day, some indifferent words pronounced in a cool manner, or sometimes a mere bow, was all that passed;

passed; the lugubrious air that appeared on every countenance, and the profound silence that reigned throughout the house, might have made it been taken for a gloomy asylum of spirits waiting with mournful impatience for the moment that was to waft them to the dwelling of eternal peace.

But some certain movements which I observed at Mrs. de Charmes's, and which my father seemed to superintend with a mysterious air, denoted as I thought some great change; accustomed, however, to respect his most trifling wish, I never attended to any thing but what he chose to communicate. And far from opposing certain gifts which I suspected he conveyed to her in some boxes clandestinely sent to her house; I thought it was possible they might restore the tranquillity she had banished by her presence. How great the difference before the introduction of this dangerous woman! a pure and serene satisfaction united all hearts, glowing with each other's happiness; it seemed as if one soul animated all our frames, and one will presided o'er all our actions.

I was

I was walking with hasty strides in my chamber, a prey to the afflicting ideas this painful comparison offered, and though almost overcome by my reflections, I was far from thinking these sorrowful thoughts were but a prelude to the terrible misfortunes with which I was menaced.

My wife who had retired to bed, (having entreated her to excuse me for a little time, as I wished to be alone) came in, and with marks of the highest despair, flung herself on a chair, wringing her hands, striking her forehead, and then pressing them to her heart—Henrietta, my dearest Henrietta, why this sudden grief?—O, my friend, collect all your fortitude! my dear husband, take pity on us! pity thyself!—Tell me, my love, tell me what has happened?—They are gone! O God! they are gone!—Who, my soul? who are gone?—That woman, and with her your father!—My father! Henrietta, do you know what you say? My father gone without speaking to me?—Are you awake?—But too much, would to God the sleep of death had preceded this dreadful wakefulness. Ungrateful  
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man! he has abandoned us for a strange woman.

This melancholy intelligence excited such an extraordinary degree of surprise and sorrow, that I was unable to speak, and supported myself against the door, almost insensible of where I was. What, I exclaimed, when my emotion was rather less, and a heavy sigh had burst from my bosom, without relieving its weight—barbarous parent, you have abandoned your son, your dear son, without fearing that the moment of such separation might be the last of his existence! Wicked, ungrateful woman, you have deprived a whole family of their happiness, in seducing the man who bestowed every favour in his power on you! And thou, his haughty wife, hast driven him from us by thy inflexibility! thy repulsive and overbearing conduct kept him from approaching thy heart, and thou wouldst not check thy persecutions until thou hadst driven him from his house! Bountiful Heaven! enable us to support the loss we have sustained!—But to depart without a word, or sigh—O, my father, you dreaded seeing your son's tears! his cries would have pierced

pierced your heart ; you could not have supported his despair with tranquillity. Ah ! they can never be insensible to my extreme sorrow ; I will fly to discover them, wherever they may be concealed, I will follow them around the globe. Should I but find them, I will support their coolness, refusals, and contempt with joy ; I will prostrate myself at their feet, embrace their knees, cling to their legs, and they shall drag me through the dust until I breathe my last sigh, before they shall disengage my hands.——But so good, and tender a parent, will he have the cruelty.——No, no, my father, you will feel my grief and despair ; I will fling myself on your bosom, my palpitating heart will communicate its feelings to your's, and encircling you in my arms, I will defy that bold and frontless woman to separate us !——

Farewell.

END OF VOL. I.

